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ABSTRACT

Seven of the articles in this journal contain first-person descriptions of the procedures and methods used by outstanding American playwrights in creating their individual plays. The playwrights explain their own writing habits, working conditions, and revision processes in an effort to clarify the elements that contribute to the unusual characteristics of their scripts. The title of each article is indicative of the style of the playwright involved: "How I Write My (Self: Plays)" by Richard Foreman, "I write these messages that come" by Maria Irene Fornes, "Visualization, Language and the Inner Library" by Sam Shepard, "Two Pages a Day" by Megan Terry, "A Reinvention of Form" by Jean-Claude van Itallie, and "...I thought I was hallucinating" by Robert Wilson. The historical section of the journal contains an article on Sologub, a dramatist of the first generation of Russian symbolists, followed by Sologub's chief theoretical work, "The Theatre of One Will," that provides keys to the writer's mystical view of the universe. Also included are an account of an innovative version of "Hamlet" presented in Russia in 1932, an index to volume 21 of the "Drama Review," and several reviews of new books on the theater arts. (MAI)

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THE DRAMA REVIEW
Playwriting Issue

Thematic Issue: Playwrights and Playwriting

Michael Kirby, Ed.

Volume 21 number 4 December 1977

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In Memoriam

Ninon Tallon Karlweis died of cancer last September in the American Hospital in Paris. She was 68 years old. Although she was little known to the general public, the world of avant-garde theatre owed her much and will not be the same without her.

Ostensibly, the role of Madame Karlweis, as she was referred to by many, was that of a theatrical agent, who worked internationally. She was responsible for bringing European productions, such as Grotowski's, to this country and for arranging tours of United States companies, such as Robert Wilson's, overseas. As an advisor to the Shiraz and Nancy festivals, among other activities, she saw a great deal of experimental theatre and was an extremely influential figure.

To those who knew her, Ninon Karlweis was a unique and unusual person. Friendly, independent, energetic, strong-minded, switching from one language to another, she was deeply involved in a search for new and unusual theatres. Although she was interested in the opinions and reactions of others, she seemed to have a strange sixth sense. Often, perhaps always, she went to sleep during performances. Yet, the stories said, she knew what had gone on and could tell you about it. She seemed to have a third eye that did not sleep.

Those who knew Ninon Karlweis mourn her passing. They will miss her greatly. Those who did not know her have also lost something—a stimulus, a force that made things happen, and energy and power in avant-garde theatre.

M.K.

Playwrights and Playwriting Issue

An Introduction

For a number of years, *The Drama Review* has attempted to counterbalance the traditional tendency to treat drama as a form of literature. We have not published unproduced playscripts; those scripts we have published have helped to document particular productions, particularly ones of historical significance. We have considered performances that had no literary aspect as well as those based on texts. Belying our name, we have focused on all of theatre rather than merely on drama.

This does not mean that we are opposed to literature, to the scripted play or to playwriting. It merely means that we feel the study of performance itself is, or should be, an independent discipline—one large enough and important enough to take the full attention of several journals.

If the script is not considered as a literary work to be analyzed with more or less the same tools as those applied to poetry and prose, how is it to be approached? One way is to consider the act of creation itself, to look at the process of formation rather than at the finished product. That is what we have attempted to do in this issue.

In developing the issue, we contacted a variety of playwrights. (Because we felt that the area was a large one, we decided to involve only those from the United States.) "Hopefully," we said, "the issue will be a practical and useful one, focusing upon procedures and methods. We are not interested in how-to-write-a-play articles but in personal descriptions of the unique and idiosyncratic ways in which significant playwrights work." We suggested that they explain their writing procedure, from habits and working conditions to revisions during production.

Some well-known playwrights were unable to write for the issue. Others found it extremely difficult to describe their creative process. In some cases, where the playwright was available for an interview even though they did not have the time to write a detailed piece for us, members of our staff edited articles from their verbal responses to questions. (We hope that these articles—although retaining the linguistic qualities of spoken, rather than written, English—are more concise, pointed, and coherent than a mere interview.) If the material we obtained was not exactly what we expected, it often did seem to offer insights into the reasons why particular scripts had certain unusual characteristics. It did seem to illuminate the correspondence between working method and finished product. We hope you agree.

M.K.

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How I Write My (Self: Plays)

by Richard Foreman

To write about my writing . . . which is, of course, what I write about, sort of, when I write plays.

It's a matter of the life I live, at certain moments (how are those moments determined?) cresting into a moment of writing.

It's a style of living, at certain moments folded back on itself to produce a style of thinking; at certain moments folded back upon itself, which leaves a residue (look, look! the hand moved over the paper and left something!) of a certain style of writing.

The life should be described first. But bear in mind that the life has, for many years, been adapting itself to a certain obsessional need to get something onto paper, to AMASS a certain kind of material on paper, which would, hopefully, as the MASS grew, suck the life itself into the orbit of the being-style manifest in the writing (which crests aspects of the living one hopes to change) . . . so the process is circular, spiral, pulling oneself up by the bootstraps.

When I am not in active rehearsal (at which moments I am full of energy, focused, highly alert) I tend to lead a certain kind of lethargic existence (yet with a certain kind of alertness ready just below the surface—like an animal dozing, who can yet awaken at the slightest "signal" of the appropriate sort).

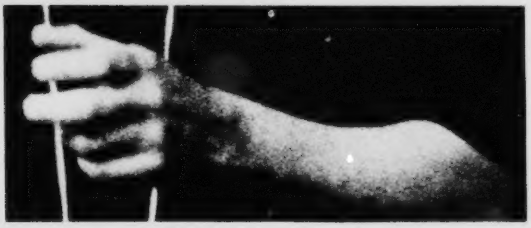
To be specific, I lie about the house, alternately reading (either skimming pages for "what I need" or reading POWERFULLY to twist what I read to my own needs), making notes (I spend a good part of the day with pen in hand, almost as an appendage, ready to JOT DOWN either notes, ideas, quotes from reading, or bits of dialog or scenes which will be in a play) and not infrequently, dozing off. (I should add, perhaps, that the reading often involves looking at pictures of one sort or another; I should also add that the NOTETAKING also involves making a multitude of small diagrams and sketches, both to clarify and map out what I've been reading and thinking and to project or imagine a relevant "setting" to what I've been writing or thinking.)

The writing itself is a cut taken in that tunnel of passivity. The entire process of making the play thought of as a certain and continual articulation of alternately passive and active modes. The writing tending towards a more receptive, open, passive receiving of "what wants to be written," and the staging tending towards more active organization of the "arrived" elements of the writing—finding ways to make the writing inhabit a constructed environment, just as a passively "arrived" species mutation finds a way, after the fact, to exploit and live in the environment in which it finds itself.

It should not be assumed that my day of writing, and within that the writing done on that day, can be thought of as exclusively passive. Indeed, an important aspect of the process is the way in which the "drift" of time and effort allows for eruptions of specific willed activity. I often begin a sequence (to be sure, that beginning the result of "having an idea" one wants to see carried out, the process of most writers, implying a kernel of receptiveness at the root of all art, even the calculated organizations of an Ibsen or Scribe) I begin a sequence "willfully" . . . and then, if it tends to "lose the energy" and peter out . . . that truth of process must be allowed to stay in the text, documenting that 95-PER-CENT-OF-THE-TIME-MOST-IMPORTANT-FERTILIZING-FACT OF MENTAL LIFE (that most projects come to naught but are nevertheless the substructure of most so-called "achievement") after which, as Stein says, "begin again."

The writing is then the documentation of the exploratory will, which "receives" ideas, turns them over to look at them, subjects them to its very per-

. . . look, look! the hand moved over the paper and left something!



sonal and idiosyncratic method of investigation, and, in so doing, EITHER receives another new idea for investigation . . . or does not. (It should be pointed out that in addition to the possibility that the received idea peters out, another "ending" for a unit which I frequently experience is a kind of premature closure in which I start with an impulse which I have the feeling opens a potential "world" for exploration—and then, somehow, after a few sentences or exchanges, I am already at the other side of the territory, having the feeling of "covering it in a single step": O.K.—begin again!)

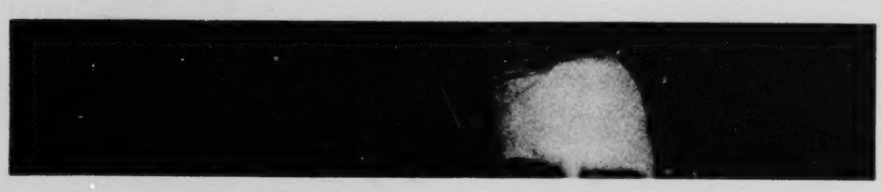
Some will now interject, "Oh, but then the plays are not really structured at all!" I would maintain that such an opinion reveals a gross misunderstanding of what is involved in the making of art—an extremely narrow view of what constitutes structure, even "willed" structure. You see, I have been working on the machine of myself for a good many years now—or, to be more exact, I have been working on the somewhat more complex machine "self and circumstance" in order to adjust that machine so that it will, when the starter button of "good-morning" is pushed, turn out a certain product which will have a certain "effect" on a certain kind of human attention—should that "certain kind" of human attention happen to come in contact with the product (my plays) in question.

It is my belief that at this moment in time, this sort of structure, spun by the articulation of the whole of self and setting, produces the "tool box" most suited to the task of performing the necessary leverage on the head and its particular collection of ideas. It's less a matter of a structure which will appropriately "package" ideas so that the consumer will be able to "get them down his gullet" (the classical modus operandi of art) but rather a structure which will force (or be there to "assist") the spectator into a new position vis-a-vis the continuing barrage of input that constitutes his life.

I say that I have spent years working on my machine—it should be clear, for instance, that the considerable amount of time I have put into writing manifestos and other articles delineating and figuring out for myself the theoretical implications and next steps for the kind of art I found myself in the middle-of-making reflects this attempt to get my consciousness into a place (through a mutual adjustment of daily life and writing) where it will IMPRINT with great directness and truth the "faulty" and yet "wondrous" mechanisms of its inescapable and continual digestion and transformation of impression-and-experience nourishment it receives from the world each day.

Why did my machine start working in this particular way? Well, there was a sequence of events which was roughly as follows:

1) Being a very shy kid, being taken to the theatre by my parents, and being so attracted to that world of make-believe that I wanted to copy it and be in it, which I did start doing at about 8 or 9 years of age, making and staging and starring in my own copies of Gilbert and Sullivan, discovering, through making it, a world in which I could both "dream" (escape) and at the same time function with an AUTHORITY (as director-producer) not available to me in other aspects of my kid-life.

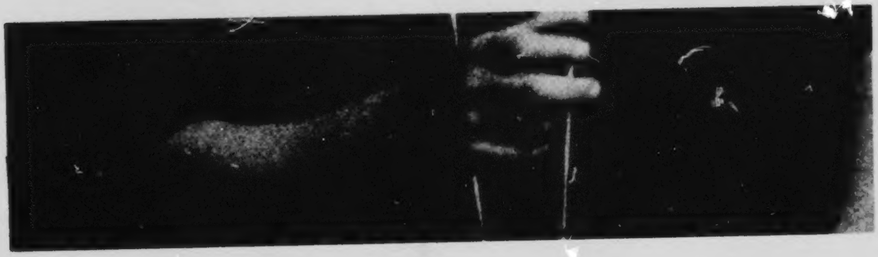


2) Continuing with a career of actor and set-designer-constructor through high school and into college; but my taste widening, being hungry for the most "experimental" work I could then find or imagine because only in that work was there the hope of occasionally finding moments, tones, colors, which seemed to match the contradictory and complex nature of reality (internal and external) which I was fast discovering was not "officially, institutionally" admitted to exist by the educational and social systems by which I was being processed.

3) In college, beginning to write because friends who were "writers" would come and ask my opinion of their latest effort, and suddenly feeling "I can do better than that!" My writing, then, after a year or so, beginning to be the writing of plays—because I basically wanted to justify myself by becoming "famous," and being a famous playwright seemed O.K. So, imitating everybody from Arthur Miller to Giradoux to Williams, Sartre, and finally Brecht. By the time I was at Yale (studying with John Gassner) I was regarded as "professionally promising"—prided myself on my "vicious" intelligence which I felt could take apart whatever needed to be taken apart, and, like most professionally oriented playwrights, delighted in my ability to not-so-much write as REWRITE plays so that they would "work" on stage (i.e. so the actors would find the kind of material with which they—and the director—could manipulate the audience through a desired sequence of emotions and emerge at the end with a nice, not too simple but not too subtle, "meaning"). It goes without saying that at this time my writing habits were to get an idea (after searching around for the right combination of theatricality and political or psychological or sociological relevance), then do an outline, then do a first draft, then rewrite and rewrite again until a) the style seemed polished and strong and b) the plot line seemed efficient and rose to the proper climaxes with the proper eddies, swirls, and theme refracting detours along the way.

At this point the writing was coming out of a highly active mode of self, in which a great deal of willed effort went into making what the super-ego determined was right and professional and IMPRESSIVE, a great deal of effort into rewriting to eliminate what did not seem "right."

4) Coming to New York and meeting Jonas Mekas and the independent N.Y. Filmmakers movement and discovering a new esthetic, built upon a truthfulness in attempting to catch the natural rhythms of the individual artist—come-what-may as a result. The big turning point in my art, learning to accept and make central to my work the very elements which I had heretofore tried to suppress and exorcise as not being "weighty, serious, impressive" enough.



5) That watershed reached, developing independent exploration of the themes and possibilities available to myself and my circumstance. Coming into the full realization that there are two ways to approach and serve art: a) the creation of structures which aim to "impress" and hypnotize and further enslave people to their own emotions and ideas or b) the putting-to-work-of-a-way-of-dealing-with-materials which embodies a sort of high and lucid and, therefore, deadly serious "playfulness" which can stand as an example to inspire both the self and others to ever greater exploration of what, momentarily, is—opening the door thereby to both freedom and creativeness.

So now, a day begins and I have pen in hand and I am doing all these things—reading, lying about, thinking, sketching, jotting things down, not knowing I suppose exactly where I'm going but knowing which road should be taken because the only OTHER road that has ever been pointed out to me has led, 150 times in a row now, to works of art which occasionally have their moments but which basically both bore me and (I would maintain) are subtly enslaving those who "make the effort" not to be bored by what they already know to be true (i.e., their own emotional responses to murders, loves, betrayals, righteous indignation in the face of injustice, and all those other fine things that classical art is always "about").

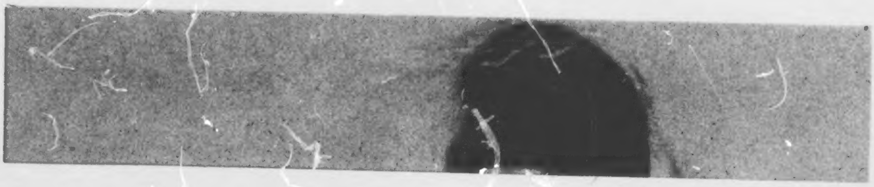
Now, all these concerns about which I have been speaking—at every moment in which I am available to do any writing—these concerns are hovering in my mind, and the writing that I do is written against that background. And it is not very EASY for me to keep myself oriented to those concerns, because they contradict the habits of my early training in school and society—and to fight, fight, fight those habits at every possible moment is my concern, and that has to be done by me consciously and rather continuously, and that effort sometimes bleeds onto the page on which I am writing as a little injunction or reminder to myself, and I allow that to stay in the writing (the play), too, because—can you see why? It's such a deep and important part of the whole effort. And can you see why the invoking and allowing of the passive mode is part of the effort—to allow in everything that I was originally conditioned to KEEP OUT! So the will, the directed activity of my "writing habits" is to keep ME, RICHARD, in a place where what I now consider the "good" writing will come from.

It is true—even now I feel frightened to admit this, it's going to be held against me as a sign of "lack of ultimate seriousness"—it is true that I no longer rewrite as I used to. It is true that I keep and then stage what appears on the page of my notebooks. (Though it is also true that when the time comes to mount another play I always have much more material than I can use, so I do select in that sense. But the material I choose to stage is always taken in sequence as it appeared, without deletions.) But this is not, I maintain, to stage "unedited" material (though God knows, that would be a perfectly justifiable and important artistic procedure also).

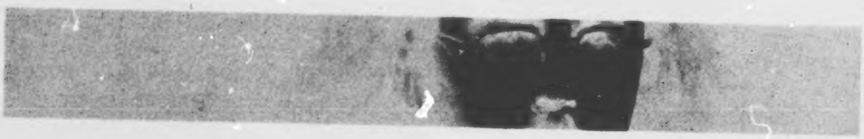
I would maintain that such an opinion reveals a gross misunderstanding of what is involved in the making of art . . .

The material is highly edited, and it is my specific writing "habit" which does the editing. As I see it, the lying around and reading goes through and is twisted by the head machine and comes out into a different part of the head and is therefore "writing." Only it doesn't get onto the page which, staged, is the "play." So that's "writing" which is edited (pre-edited) from the play. Then there is the continual hum of thought, which is being written and most of which doesn't get onto the play's page—even though, remember, the pen is always in hand, paper always near and ready to receive the least twitch of a tendency toward actual, physical, ink-on-page-writing. One of my plays speaks of "writing out of low energy," and what this refers to is the fact that I have been concerned to develop a writing habit which demanded the least possible manual energy as well as the least needed "will-to-write" energy, since it seemed to me that any need for the invoking of THOSE energies would interfere with and deflect the more elusive "thought and impression" energy whose shape and gesture I hope to *trap* upon the page.

But the writing technique does not end with that certain crest of thought washing itself lightly onto the page where it leaves its idiosyncratic trace. Since the physical "writing" is but part of a larger cycle of "being in life" in a certain way--every element of that cycle interacting, mixing, and altering the terms of the other elements— it is important to realize that the following stages are stages of the "writing" itself, and though they occur "later in time," the pen-on-page writing is always molding itself to the already-existing contours of those later movements which include: 1) the physical act of typing the handwritten manuscript 2) the various problem-solving moments of staging 3) my own experiencing of audience-watching-the-play, which involves my own adjustments of the rhythm of performance, which I control from the sound booth during each performance. (Though this last aspect may change this year, as I plan to present the first Ontological-Hysteric Theatre production for which I will not be operating the sound.)



1) To type the handwritten text, which had included illustrations and graphological variations of all sorts, is to eliminate certain wideness of texture which, in the original manuscript, represents for me a very special "wideness" of mental posture. The text as handwritten is the making of a concrete, physical object. Writing as the encrustation of a history of "marking"—of INSCRIBING mind into matter. To type is to transform this "archeological record" into a digital, bodyless form which only the staging will return to concrete, physical reality. The idiosyncrasies of handwriting and sketch will reemerge in the staging—in a different form, which may make the "meaning" of the original text drift a bit. That mediating "typed" text is an important step which takes away from the original fullness, so that a void of sorts is created, which will then evoke the necessary "filling" action of the staging. The resultant "drift" is also important to me, as it opens the text and the original impulses to a degree of contingency and improvisation which can only testify to the integral "truth" (i.e. inhabitableness) of the process I have set in motion, which reveals one aspect of itself under the guise of "text" (or, if you will, play).



2) I have indicated that the staging is a series of problem-solving tasks which "re-concretizes" the text. It's a matter of finding equivalencies for the densities and special "auras" established by the graphics—typological as well as drawn—of the original manuscript. The sound-layering I use—tapes of repeated words, noises, music—also serves to reflect the multiple pulls of the visual and ideational aspects of manuscript. As you can see, the staging, then, is not an attempt to CONVINCE the audience of the play's reality or verisimilitude . . . but rather an effort to rewrite the text back into manuscript (the imprint of the personal hand) style.

3) Finally, the audience comes, and I am in front of my text, and they are watching me watch my text. And the performance is segmented by noises and tape cues which I control—and just as the text's generation is an attempt to re-segment the ordinary flow of my life by establishing a new balance between moments when the hand is moving over the paper and moments when it is not—so that segmentation in performance is both a reflection of and a continuation of that approach to writing as re-segmentation. It is a CONTINUATION of my writing process.

I tend to lead a certain kind of lethargic existence . . . like an animal dozing, who can yet awaken at the slightest "signal" of the appropriate sort.

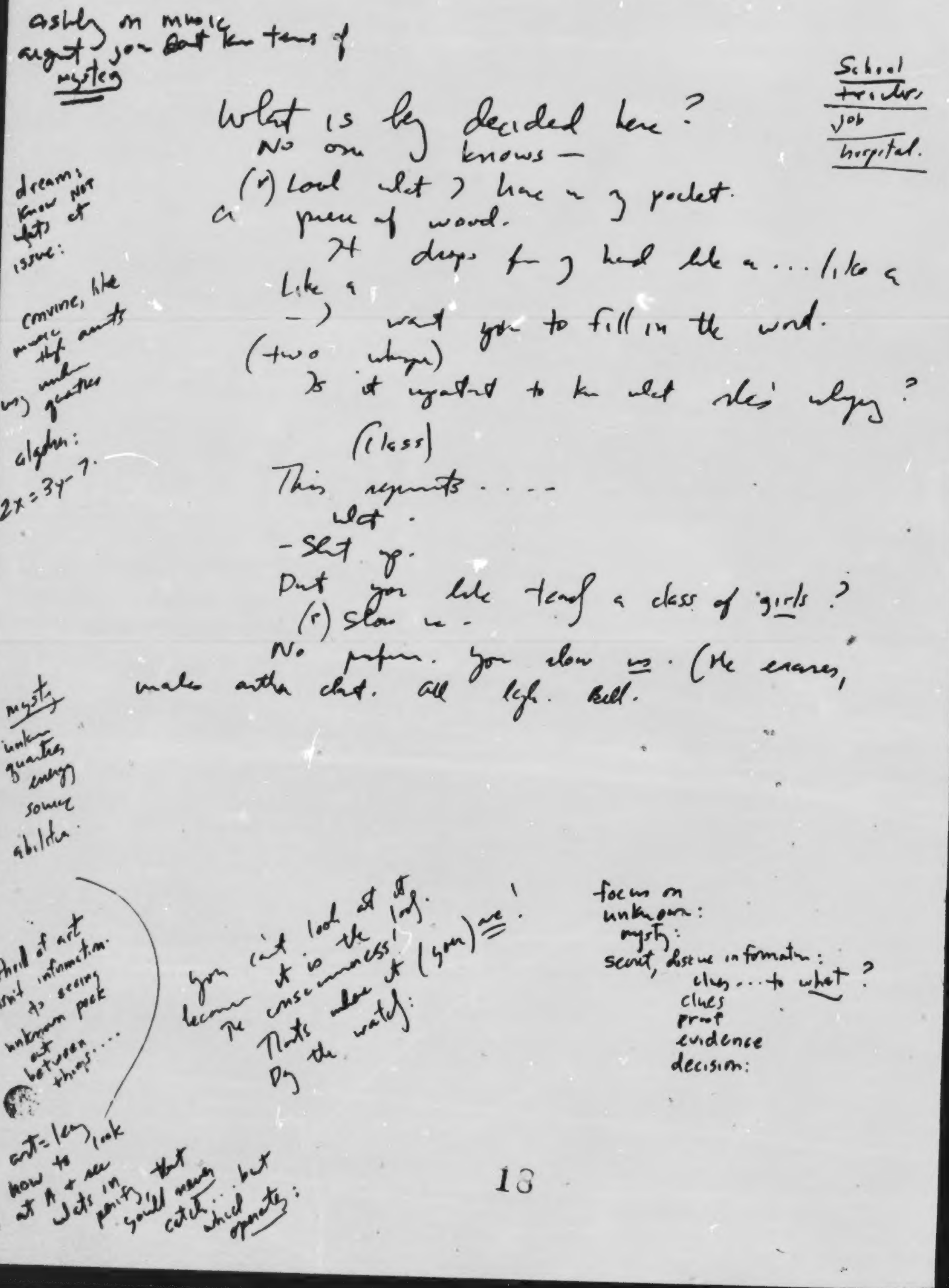
I should add at this point, that the text-making process I have described, which skims the crest off the wave of my living (and to which I then try to retune my living, out of which will emerge the next crest of writing), that process continues over the days and weeks and does not stop and begin for each "play" but is a continual process from which "plays" are later extracted. At a certain point I pick up one of my notebooks, look casually through it and decide "Hum. . . go from here to here and I have a play." Which means that the text of any given work is a series of "change of subjects"—which I believe becomes the subject of the work itself as that continual change-of-subject, interruption, re-beginning, reflects the true shape and texture of conscious experience, which recognized and reflected in the work of art puts us in the very "place" where being-human becomes a free and creative way-of-being. (An extended meditation on this subject of play-of-changes-of-subject will be included in the program for my next production this winter.)

Suffice it to say at this point that when I said, at the beginning of this article, that my plays were "about" HOW I WRITE, I meant that the writing is generated in a certain way which ends up producing structures with a form and texture which is the very embodiment of the theories and goals which are the "reasons for doing the writing." And it happens because at a certain point in my life I became convinced that the more one tried to write a play "about" some subject, the more one

invariably lied about that subject, left out the very way in which that subject manifested itself in the real life of real people—the more one simply alluded very vaguely to "something not present" in the writing itself. And I began, instead, to attempt to radicalize and illuminate the true processes and tendencies within my own "living and doing"—which happened to be my writing of plays. While the deepest, most serious and pertinent "subject" of the work is always this "method of making the process be—in the way of embodying itself" establishing thereby a BEACON by which other parts of life can be charted, it is equally true that the human tendency to converge toward certain institutionalized "shapes" of more ordinary and schematized meaning-patterns can hardly be avoided, and I have discovered that in staging each of my plays, more conventional "themes" always emerge—but they are, to me, not central, not life-giving, not the source of energy and illumination after which I quest. (For the doubters, I will simply state that, for instance, *Pandering to the Masses* clearly centered itself on this second more superficial level on the relation between knowing and dying to habit and convention; *Rhoda in Potatoland* on the physicality and urge to tumescence of all "body-things" as they try to swamp mind-things in us; *Book of Splendors* on the world experienced as pure "multiplicity" and the mind's effort to steer clearly through, and using, that multiplicity.)

At a certain point I pick up one of my notebooks, look casually through it and decide "Hum . . . go from here to here and I have a play."

A scene from *Book of Splendors: Part II (Book of Levers): Action at a Distance* in three forms—Foreman's notebook, typewritten script, and performance photograph.



ashley on music
august you don't know terms of
mystery

School
teachers
job
hospital.

What is being decided here?
No one knows—
(r) Look what I have in my pocket.
a piece of wood.
It drops from my hand like a ... like a
Like a
—I want you to fill in the word.
(two whisper)
Is it important to know what she's whispering?
(class)
This represents ....
what.
—Shut up.
Don't you like teaching a class of girls?
(r) Show me—
No problem. You show us. (He erases, makes another chart. All laugh. Bell.

dreams:
know not
facts at
issue:

convince, like
music
that counts
using unknown
quantities

algebra:
2x = 3y − 7.

mystery
unknown
quantities
energy
source
abilities.

third of art
unit information.
to seeing
unknown peek
at
between
things....

art = learn
how to look
at A & see
whats in
painting that
you'll never
catch... but
which
operates:

You can't look at it
because it is the look.
The consciousness!
Thats where it (you) are!
Dig the watch:

focus on
unknown:
mystery:
secret, discover information:
clues ... to what?
clues
proof
evidence
decision:

BOB

This represents

KATE

What

BOB

Shut up

KATE

Don't you like teaching a class of girrrrls?

JOHN & BOB

Show me

4 GIRLS TOGETHER (KATE INCL.)

No professor. You show us.

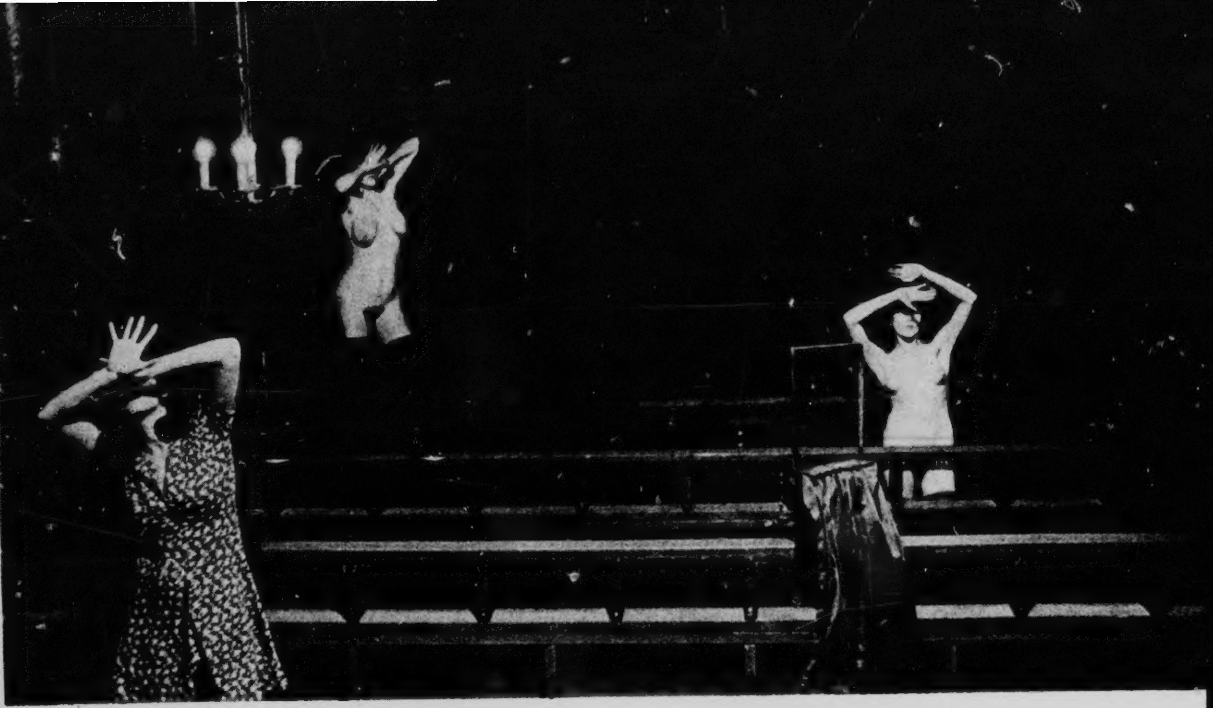
Photo? Photos ~~of the~~ Photos?

He was [illegible] sights of the city. But the city itself was ~~blind his~~ Sly! Bluff! Like going out ~~nude. I'd like to~~ get it like water out of a pitcher. Drink Drink Drink.

nude. I'd like my photo taken -
By nobody in particular
By anybody in particular.
(Rhoda is [illegible] ugh) First, she'd better get undressed.
You know I can't.
Why not.
Don't you need more light to take proper photos? (curtains [illegible])
Screams
They were blinded by the light.

(Badly Rhoda - [illegible])

Lucky Rhoda. You'll recover soon.
But I fled, Elaine.
She's not so lucky I'm afraid...



TAPE

HE WAS SELLING PHOTOS OF THE CITY.
BUT THE CITY ITSELF WAS BEHIND HIM.
SHINING. BLINDING.
LIKE POURING OUT OF IT LIKE WATER OUT OF A PITCHER.
DRINK. DRINK. DRINK.

CYNTHIA

I'd like my photo taken.

JOHN AND KATE

By anybody in particular?

PAYTON

First she'd better get undressed

KATE

You know I can't

CYNTHIA

Why not

PAYTON

Don't you need more light to take proper photos

TAPE

THEY WERE BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

CAMILLE

Lucky Rhoda, you'll recover soon

KATE

But my friend Eleanor

ANNA

She's not so lucky I'm afraid

Another scene from *Book of Splendors* in three different forms.

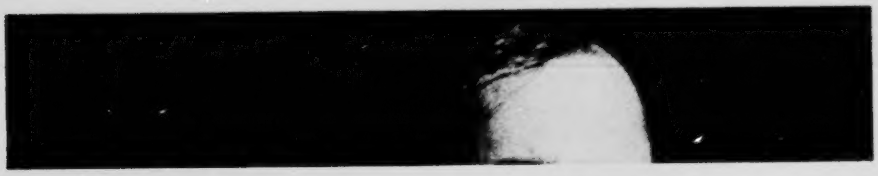
How I write my plays? I try to let them grow, in the fields and oceans of my days which succeed one another, each day reattacking the *same* problem with that "change of subject" that is the new day. So I try to write in such a way that the mark on the page is NOT a continuation, but a change of direction, always a change of direction, always something that was till now "left out" . . . only to find out in the end that it WAS a continuation after all. My habit is to try and write BEFORE writing, to make the writing the preparation BEFORE writing. Pen always in hand, paper ready to catch its scribble . . . "Humm . . . I *MIGHT* write such-and-such . . ." And through that "I *MIGHT*" (which I think of as somewhat akin to the Brechtian acting technique of "showing," of commenting upon the gesture "as-if" it were really being made), through such an "I *MIGHT*" of writing, the rest of the world of the not-written is still somehow available, and the writing (and reading and seeing it staged) is a training in a certain psychic posture of keeping all alternatives and departures from THAT moment and THAT impulse available. To "MIGHT write" is to stay in the center of where writing arises. Where thinking arises. Where living arises. Only it's not a center . . . it's an everywhere.

. . . even in performance I want to keep that feeling of a primordial "scribble" . . .

SEVEN ADDITIONAL INTERESTING IDEAS WHICH ARE NOT IN THE ABOVE ARTICLE, BUT NOW THEY ARE. (You see? The article turns into something more like one of my plays, and you see how they get written.)

First—why are these ideas not "in" the article? Because the article is "trying to write an article," and that means automatically that things that don't fit in the article might get left out but still might be important things. Even more important—they might have been left out of the article because of a certain FAILURE of a certain sort on my part, but that FAILURE of a certain sort might lead to the following NEW idea, which is having a list of interesting different things at the end of the article, and that might be more interesting than a fully integrated and whole article because it implies and embodies the underlying and exciting conflict going on in the writing; the conflict between the energy of being-in-a-certain-stream of stylistic discourse, and the energy of having certain ideas I wanted to express BEFORE I had entered and been absorbed by that discursive stream. That conflict between "expression," the self-energizing environment it creates around the writer, vs. the claims of ideas, insights or images he—outside of being-in-the-writing—wishes to communicate . . . that conflict is basic and echoed in many life fields other than "writing plays."

But here are the seven ideas (and the decision to have just seven was arrived at PREVIOUS to formulating for myself exactly what those ideas would be). I thought to myself, "Ah, this article seems a bit short, so perhaps seven more items . . . ." (Why did I think it short? What relevance did its length have to what I anticipated and hoped might be its effect upon the readers of this magazine?) All these considerations, all these grounds for making decisions about the form and style of this article seem to me reflected in the shape of the article and, therefore, the article EMBODIES its ideas as well as speaks about them—which is (I think) what my plays do.

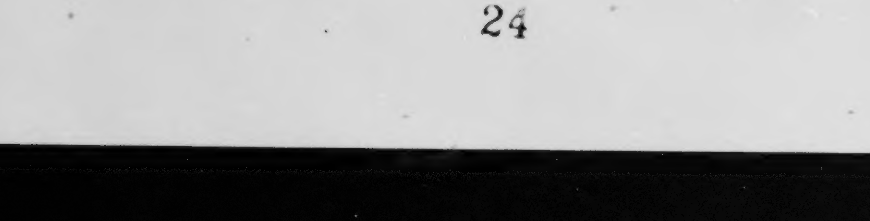


1) Sleep. I take naps during the day. To "clear" my mind, so that I can "begin again"—start a new day, as it were, whose writing will come from a new place. It's as if my writing were trying to define some "unseeable" object whose outline can only be traced through a one-step-removed method akin to the physicist's method of firing electrons at a particle and catching the electron's patterns of deflection on a photographic plate. So I "fire" bursts of writing at an invisible particle (a certain state of being, a certain dreamed of, intuited, level of consciousness or attention) and the writing, some of it, hits the page. But then, to avoid being dragged into the river of that "discourse which has just gotten under way," I need to move back to the firing area. I SLEEP, I NEGATE THE DRIFT of the writing burst I've just fired, its tendency to live its own life and write its own development. I wake up cleansed, and fire again!

2) John Gassner, my teacher at Yale, used to greet his playwright students when meeting casually in the street or corridor with "Hello, hello, well how is the scribbling going?" Though I'm sure it was far from what he had in my mind—my habit is to radicalize that suggestion of his and make my handwriting large, sloppy, like a scribble, so that things besides intention come through. At least, another level of intention. Sometimes, when I then come to type up the manuscript, there are words I cannot make out. Yet they must be typed—so something from another place within me is allowed, at that point, to interfere. In addition, in the handwritten manuscript, I no longer indicate who is saying what line—the *field* is doing the speaking. Usually the lines are not assigned until rehearsal—and even in performance I want to keep that feeling of a primordial "scribble" out of which discourse and meaning slowly built their empire.

3) My habit is, when in writing a unit of six or seven lines I come to a halt (and even from the beginning, when I was in school, writing "realistic" plays, I would compose one to six lines at a time, then wander about for ten minutes, then a few more, etc.), often to "shock" the writing back into alertness I will shift the grammatic "person" reference in order to angle the active-in-the-scene perspective differently. It's a bit, I suppose, like a cut in the movies. In other words, Rhoda is saying things referring to herself in the normal first person, and then she will suddenly shift to self-reference in the third person. The point is this shift is not to imply something about HER psychology or aim within the scene, but is an articulating of the writing itself—I wish to (need to, in order to have the energy to go on writing!) shift the parameters of the scene or unit. Then, of course, the further things being said will somehow have to reflect upon or embody the implications of that shift.

4) My reading. Which goes on in snatches during the writing. Shifts, skips, make a collage of reading so that the reading seems often to be a means of orientation which will keep me (my head) EQUIDISTANT from a variety of tendencies of thought and feeling. In other words, my "writing-habit" of reading is to use the reading as a tuning mechanism—NOT to be tuned to what I am reading, but to keep myself "widened" and available (to what is not present). To make all the "readings"—in collaboration with what else is happening in the space where I am—keep me from being in a "center," which would deny, for the moment, the reality of things in OTHER centers.



5) I can't WILL the changes of subject of which my work is made. Sometimes I try to—I think, "O.K., that scene seems good and enough of that, now I want to start from another place in such a way that the reverberations between the two will be productive . . . ," and I make the attempt to "begin-again," but it never works. I have to wait for the next day, or go to sleep, or hope that I will be "distracted" and then, not willed, something else gets scribbled on the page and, having forgotten the context of surrounding pages, the new item is the one I've been waiting for and produces the proper reverberations. (Again, when I come to select my twenty or thirty pages of manuscript for staging, I must insist that I am always moved by the way in which the unifying context of the new play slowly emerges, the same and yet a different perspective upon that "same" for each different play.)

6) My habit is, sometimes, to see a unit I've just written, find it just TOO terrible or simplistic or flat or embarrassing or badly written . . . and cross it out. Then, if that crossed out section happens to fall within those pages I've chosen to stage, I end up feeling guilty about trying to "cast-off" something which did indeed come out of me, no matter how much it embarrassed me, and I decide to stage that crossed out section along with the rest. Needless to say, in the finished product, that crossed out section usually proves to be one of the stronger and more memorable moments of the piece.

7) It is my habit to prepare and refine my theoretical approach to my art with a never-ending stream of notes and observations, which pile up on loose pages placed next to my typewriter or tacked to a bulletin board, and that activity accompanies on most days the growth of a play-text material proper; and often, having written out for myself a theoretical excerpt I will then directly provide myself with a little illustration of the notion, and that illustration is part of the play-text later on, when that text is selected. But I have not the slightest hesitation at any point to a) directly contradict any of my theoretical notes in any way whatsoever that comes to me, and b) accept and include anything that comes to me arbitrarily for any reason from any source—so long as the hand with pen is twitching and lets that material onto the page. And yet the resultant work (whether one likes it or does not like it) is clearly consistent, whole, and possessed of a certain mysterious logic which will one day explain itself more fully.

8) (Which is one more than was promised.) It is my habit to end my plays abruptly, but with a certain ambiguity as to whether or not the play is indeed over. That kind of "ending" happens many times in my work previous to the ending. And it always happens in my head, which is always "changing the subject"—but in a certain way.

“I write these messages that come.”

by María Irene Fornés

Maria Irene Fornes

Thoughts come to my mind at any point, anywhere—I could be on the subway—and if I am alert enough and I have a pencil and paper, I write these *messages* that come. It might be just a thought, like a statement about something, an insight, or it could be a line of dialog. It could be something that someone says in my head.

I have a box filled with these scribbles. Some of them are on paper napkins or the backs of envelopes. These things are often the beginning of a play. Most of the lyrics of the songs that I write are based on these notes—as opposed to a play, which, once it starts, *I* make. I usually gather a number of those things that have some relation—again, I do not even know why I consider that they are related—and I put them together. I compose something around those messages using a number of lines that have come into my head.

Now sometimes I am trying to get myself organized, and I am sharpening pencils and doing all those things. So I go to that pile of notes—it's a mess because it is scribblings. Sometimes I cannot read what I wrote because often I make notes in dark theatres when I am sitting through a play. (A lot of thoughts come into my mind when I am watching a play, especially a play that I am not at all absorbed by.) I start typing through some of these things and very often I find things I cannot imagine why in the world I thought they were anything special. They are the most mundane thoughts or phrases. Sometimes I think, "There is some value here that I do not recognize now, but at *some* point I thought, 'this is a message.' It must be that it is, but I have lost the thought." When that happens I often type it out and leave it, even though it is without any faith at all. I leave it because at some point I did have this faith.

The feeling I have about these messages is very different from what I have about what I am writing when it is *I* writing. I might write something that I like, and it feels good. But the feeling I have about those other things is really as if it is a message that comes in an indivisible unit. I feel if a word is changed, then it is lost. A thought comes—sometimes I do not have a pencil with me—I try to repeat it in my head until I get to a pencil. I know I must remember the exact construction of the sentence. I might be wrong, you see. It could be that it does not matter more or less how it is said. But still I feel that it is a block and that is how it should look, whether it is a page of dialog that comes in the message or three pages or one line.

My plays do not present . . . a formulated thesis . . . I lost interest in that way of working.

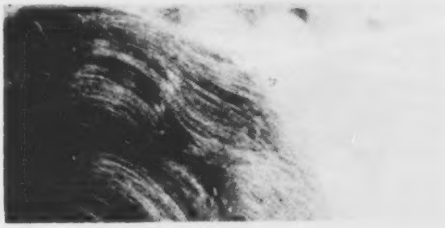
That dialog then could become a play. When I am to write a work, I never start from a blank page. I only start from one of these things that I do, that I receive. Sometimes I start a play from one line of dialog. It has to be something that has the makings of a play.

The only play that I started from an idea—and it was an idea that was very clear in my head—and that I sat down and wrote was *Tango Palace.* I think it is quite clear that that is how it is written because the play has a very strong, central idea. None of my other plays does. They are not Idea Plays. My plays do not present a thesis, or at least, let us say, they do not present a formulated thesis. One can make a thesis about anything (I could or anyone could formulate one), but I do not present ideas except in *Tango Palace.* I lost interest in that way of working.

The play writes itself. The first draft writes itself anyway. Then I look at it and I find out what is in it. I find out where I have overextended it and what things need to be cut. I see where I have not found the scene. I see what I have to do for the character to exist fully. Then I rewrite. And of course in the rewrite there is a great deal of thought and sober analysis.

One day I was talking to Rochelle Owens, and I was telling her how when I start working on a play the words are just on paper. Perhaps I will see some things or I hear something. I feel the presence of a character or person. But then there is a point when the characters become crystallized. When that happens, I have an image in full color, technicolor. And that *happens*! I do not remember it happening, but I get it like *click!* At some point I see a picture of the set with the characters in it—let us say a picture *related* to the set, not necessarily the exact set.

The colors for me are very, very important. And the colors of the clothes the people wear. When it finally happens, the play exists; it has taken its own life. And



then I just listen to it. I move along with it. I let it write itself. I have reached that point in plays at times. I have put scripts away then and picked them up three years later, and, reading them, suddenly I see that same picture with the same colors. The color never goes away. It could be ten years later. The play exists even if I have not finished writing it. Even if it is only fifteen pages. It is like an embryo that is already alive and it is there waiting.

I am always amazed how an audience knows when a play is finished. That is something that I have always found very beautiful. Sometimes when I go to the theatre when it is not written in the program that there is going to be an intermission, and when it is quite clear that something has ended, people say, "Is it over?" But they say it with surprise. The actors have left the stage, but it does not look over. People know. And then when it is really over, there is that immediate knowledge that it has ended, and people applaud. In that same way, I know when a script has completed itself. I sense the last note of the play.

. . . . there is a point when the characters become crystallized. When that happens I have an image in full color, technicolor.

One play of mine has about three endings. It looks like it has ended, but then there is another ending, and then there is another ending. These are *almost-endings*, and they do not have that total satisfaction of a real ending. It could have been that I could have left it. But probably people would have been asking, "Is it over?" "Oh, it's over."

The characters: they talk. And when it talks, a character starts developing itself. I never try to reproduce a real character. I did, in fact, try to reproduce real people that I knew in one play, *The Office*. I got into trouble because the characters in the situation were from real life, and I changed a lot of things in the play. I felt that I lacked the objectivity to make the play really sharp and for me to be sure exactly what I was doing. Since I started with a reality of what happened, it was the event that was important. And that event would not work for the play.

I make notes in dark theatres when I am sitting through a play . . . especially a play that I am not at all absorbed by.

I know a lot of people write either about a real person or else they put a familiar character into an invented situation. I find that it just confuses me, that I do not see that as useful for me in any way.

In that same conversation with Rochelle Owens, I told her about my colors. She found it very interesting. And I said, "You mean you don't see color when you write? I thought everybody saw color!" But she does not. I asked what happens to her, and she said she hears voices. She hears the sound of what the play is saying. Sometimes she is writing and she knows that a sentence should be bah-bah-bah-bah, but the words do not come immediately. Rather than stopping, she goes on and she leaves that blank space. She goes on because the other words are coming. She knows how it has to sound, and she goes back to it. It comes in exactly that form. That is very different from my own work.

Everything that I have written has had a different start. *Successful Life of 3* started when I heard two men speaking to each other. One of them was an actor I knew. That conversation was actually in my head. Not that I wanted to write the play for that actor, it is just that he was there and this other guy was there, and he did not have a very definite face. That caught my imagination completely. I wrote the play in two weeks.

At the same time, I was writing *Promenade*, which I wrote as an exercise I gave myself. I wrote down the characters on one set of index cards. On another set of cards, I wrote different places. I shuffled them together. I picked a card that said, "The Aristocrats." And I picked the card that said, "The Prison." So the play started in prison for that reason. But I found it very difficult to write a scene with aristocrats in prison, so the first thing that happened was that they were digging a hole to escape. I wanted to get them out of there.

For some reason it worked for me that the prisoners remained prisoners. And in the next scene, they were at a banquet where there were aristocrats. After that, I found using the cards for the characters was not helping me at all. But I kept using the place cards. That is why the play has six different locations. I would write a scene and when I was finished writing that scene I would turn to the next card. That was the order the scenes came in.

. . . a message . . . comes in an indivisible unit. I feel if a word is changed, then it is lost.

By the way, I find doing exercises very valuable. It is good for me not to do things too deliberately: to have half my mind on something else and *let* something start happening. I am really very analytical. I like analyzing things, but it is better for me not to think very much. Only after I have started creating can I put all my analytical mind into it.

Most of my plays start with a kind of a fantasy game—just to see what happens. *Fefu and Her Friends* started that way. There was this woman I fantasized who was talking to some friends. She took her rifle and shot her husband. Also, there is a Mexican joke where there are two Mexicans speaking at a bullfight. One says to the other, "She is pretty, that one over there." The other one says, "Which one?" So the first one takes his rifle and shoots her. He says, "That one, the one that falls."

. . . starting to write is not difficult—it is impossible. It is just excruciating.

So in the first draft of the play, Fefu does just that. She takes her rifle and she shoots her husband. He falls. Then she explains that they heard the Mexican joke and she and her husband play that game. That was just my fantasy: thinking of the joke, how absurd it was. But I do not know what came first, the shooting fantasy or the memory of the joke. (Finally, I left the joke out of the play.)

I started *Fefu and Her Friends* about thirteen years ago. There was just that scene. Then three years later I started again. Then there was a woman in a wheelchair. The play was very different then, but the spirit was actually quite similar. About five years ago, I started really writing, really seeing what had to be done and shaping it. And that was much closer to what it is today. Early this year, I decided I wanted to do that play—finish it and put it on. I just sat down and did it.

A playwright has a different distance from each script. Some are two feet away, and some are two hundred feet away. *Fefu* was not even two inches away. It is right where I am. That is difficult to do when one feels close. A different kind of

delicacy enters into the writing. Each day I had to put myself into the mood to write the play. I wrote it in a very short period of time, in a very intense period of writing, where I did nothing but write, write, write. Every day I would start the day by reading my old folder (a different folder from the one where I keep my "messages"), where I have all my sufferings, personal sufferings: the times when I was in love and not, the times I did badly, all those anguishes which were really very profound. There were times that I just had to sit down and write about it because I felt anguish about it. It was not writing for the sake of writing; it was writing for the sake of exorcism. A lot of those things had been in this folder for many years. I had never looked at them. That was where the cockroaches were, so to speak.

I would start the day by reading something from that folder. Actually, there were even a couple times when I used things I found there, but most of it is garbage, really garbage, a collection of dirt: the whining, the complaining. But it would put me into that very, very personal, intimate mood to write.

I never before set up any kind of environment to write a play! This was the first time that I did that because the play was different. I had to reinforce the intimacy of the play.

I am delighted when something is not deliberate . . . When something happens by accident, I trust it.

Then I would put on the records of a Cuban singer, Olga Guillot. She is very passionate and sensuous. She is shameless in her passion. And I wrote the whole play listening to Olga Guillot. (My neighbors must have thought I was out of my mind.) There was one record, *Añorando el Caribe,* that particularly seemed to make my juices run. I just left it on the turntable and let it go on and on and on. The play had nothing to do with Olga Guillot. Her spirit is very different. She is very dramatic. And Fefu is very subtle and very delicate. But her voice kept me oiled.

I started the final writing of *Fefu* in February, 1977. At that time, I had about a third of the play written. It opened May 5, 1977. In those three months, I finished writing, I cast it, and I rehearsed it. I finished the play four days before it opened. I do not mean the very last scene. There were scenes in the middle I had to do. I made no revisions during rehearsals. I have to do some rewriting of the play now. I believe I must approach the rewrite in the same way as before: with the pile of writing and Olga Guillot.

Space affected *Fefu and Her Friends.* In late February, I decided to look for a place to perform the work. I had finished the first scene, and I had loose separate scenes that belonged somewhere in the second part of the play. I did not like the space I found because it had large columns. But then I was taken backstage to the

rooms the audience could not see. I saw the dressing room, and I thought, "How nice. This could be a room in Fefu's house." Then I was taken to the greenroom. I thought that this also could be a room in Fefu's house. Then we went to the business office to discuss terms. That office was the study of Fefu's house. (For the performance we took some of the stuff out, but we used the books, the rugs, everything that was there.) I asked if we could use all of their rooms for the performances, and they agreed.

I had written Julia's speech in the bedroom already. I had intended to put it on stage, and I had not yet arrived at how it would come about. Part of the kitchen scene was written, but I had thought it would be happening in the living room. So I had parts of it already. It was the rooms themselves that modified the scenes which originally I planned to put in the living room.

People asked me, when the play opened, if I had written those scenes to be done in different rooms and then found the space. No. They were written that way

I think there is always a person I am writing for. In my mind that person is saying, "Oh, yes, I love it!"

because the space was there. I had to figure out the exact coordination for the movements between one scene and the other so the timing would be right. I had rehearsed each scene separately. Now I was going to rehearse them simultaneously. Then I realized that my play, *Aurora*, had exactly the same concept. There was the similarity of two different rooms with simultaneous life. I did not consciously realize until then that it had some connection with *Aurora*.

> **I feel about it the same way I feel about jumping off a bridge.**

I mention this because people put so much emphasis on the deliberateness of a work. I am delighted when something is not deliberate. I do not trust deliberateness. When something happens by accident, I trust that the play is mak-

ing its own point. I feel something is happening that is very profound and very important. People go far in this thing of awareness and deliberateness; they go further and further. They go to see a play and they do not like it. So someone explains it to them, and they like it better. How can they *possibly* understand it better, like it better, or see more of it because someone has explained it?

I am very good at explaining things. And whatever I do not understand, I can even invent. There are people who do beautiful work and do not know why, and they think it is invalid. Those who are not good at explanation are at a disadvantage, but their work is as valid.

And I said, "You mean you don't see color when you write? I thought everybody saw color!"

I think it is impossible to aim at an audience when writing a play. I never do. I think that is why some commercial productions fail. They are trying to create a product that is going to create a reaction, and they cannot. If they could, every play on Broadway that is done for that purpose would be a great success. They think they know. They try and they fail. I know I do not know, but even if I did, I do not think I would write for the audience.

As a matter of fact, when the audience first comes to one of my plays, my feeling is that they are intruders. Especially when I have directed the play, I feel that I love my play so much, and I enjoy it so and feel so intimate with the actors, that when opening night arrives I ask, "What are all those people doing in my house?" Then it changes, of course, especially if they like it. I might even think I wrote it for them if they like it. I love to have an audience like a play. But during the work period, they are never present. Basically I feel that if I like something, other people will like it, too.

I think there is always a *person* I am writing for. Sometimes it is a specific person that I feel is there with me enjoying it in my mind. In my mind, that person is saying, "Oh, yes, I love it!" Or if it is not a specific person, it is a kind of person. It might be someone who does not really have a face, but it is a friend, someone who likes the same things. If we saw a play, we both would like it or we both would dislike it. So in a way I am writing for an "audience." But it is not for the public, not for the critics, not the business of theatre.

I feel that the state of creativity is a very special state. And most people who write or who want to write are not very aware that it is a state of mind. Most people when they cannot write say, "I can't write. I'm blocking." And then at another point they are writing a lot and they cannot stop; it appears to be a very mysterious thing, writing. Sometimes the Muse is speaking and other times it is not. But I think it is possible to put oneself in the right state of mind in the same manner that some people do meditation. There are techniques to arrive at particular states of consciousness. But we artists do not know the techniques. I do not know, either. I learned to do it with *Fefu and Her Friends* with my notes and record. But who knows? Maybe I could have done the play anyway.

My neighbors must have thought I was out of my mind.

I find that when I am not writing, *starting* to write is not difficult—it is impossible. It is just excruciating. I do not know the reason, for once I get started it is very pleasurable. I can think of nothing more pleasurable than being in the state of creativity. When I am in that state, people call me, say, to go to a party, to do things that are fun, to do the things where usually I would say, "Oh yes! Of course!" And nothing seems as pleasurable as writing.

But then I finish writing, and that state ends. It just seems that I do not want to go back to it. I feel about it the same way I feel about jumping off a bridge. And to keep from writing, I do everything. I sharpen pencils. In the past few days, it has been a constant thing of sitting at a typewriter and saying, "Oh! Let me get my silverware in order!" It seems very important because, when I might need a cup of coffee, the spoons will be all lined up. Incredible. It is incredible. So I go back to the typewriter. I say, "Oh! I need a cup of coffee." And then, "I better go get a pack of cigarettes so I'll have them here." And then there is starching my clothes. That is something I started this summer. It is a very lovely thing. I make my own starch. I have to wash my clothes. I have to let them dry, then starch them. They are hard to iron. I usually do not press my clothes. I just wear them. But now that I am writing, all my jeans are starched and pressed and all my shirts are starched and pressed. Anything is better than writing.

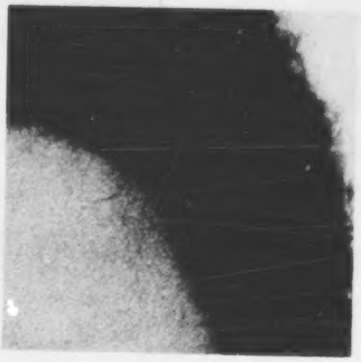
. . . when the audience first comes to one of my plays, my feeling is that they are intruders.

Transcribed and edited by Robb Creese from a recorded interview.

A Growth of Images

by Adrienne Kennedy

Adrienne Kennedy



I don't believe you intentionally set out to write the things you write.

Autobiographical work is the only thing that interests me, apparently because that is what I do best. I write about my family. In many ways I would like to break out of that, but I don't know how to break out of it. In fact I would really like to write more about the people who were before my own immediate family, like my grandparents and their family. I have two children, but I've never been able to write about them.

I feel overwhelmed by family problems and family realities. I see my writing as being an outlet for inner, psychological confusion and questions stemming from childhood. I don't know any other way. It's really figuring out the "why" of things—that is, if that is even possible. I'm not sure you can figure out the "why" of anything anymore.

You try to struggle with the material that is lodged in your unconscious, and try to bring it to the conscious level. You try to remain as honest about that as possible, without fear. I don't believe you intentionally set out to write the things you write. For instance, I would like to write mystery stories like Agatha Christie, or much lighter things which are far less torturous, but I feel you must be honest by letting the material come to the surface. And just accept it.

It's not necessarily that easy, because I think your intellect is always working against you to censor. You must just let the material come out and not be frightened about it and not censor it. Just trust yourself and do not have an opinion of your previous work. One must always fight against that imitation of oneself.

My writing, therefore, really requires a certain amount of time-lapse between the event and the written product. I do keep a journal and have always kept some type of written diary, but I have never been happy with that. Diaries and journals always seem so time-consuming.

I'm not sure you can figure out the "why" of anything anymore.

You can only spend so many hours a day writing about yourself or your world. I trust those periods when I'm not writing constantly. I believe in long periods of resting, not working against yourself by forcing yourself to write when you don't want to. I believe in being relaxed but not in letting things lie dormant for a long time or in between times.

Work does, however, play a very big part in my life. I do write and then go back and work on it some more. Most important, it's really a lot of hard work.

You must just let the material come out and not be frightened about it and not censor it.

I think about things for many years and keep loads of notebooks, with images, dreams, ideas I've jotted down. I see my writing as a growth of images. I think all my plays come out of dreams I had two or three years before; I played around with the images for a long period of time to try to get to the most powerful dreams.

As an example, *A Rat's Mass* was based on a dream I had once when I was on a train. I was very frightened, doing something I had never done before. I was on a train going from Paris to Rome, and I was going to try to live in Rome for a few months. I was with my seven-year-old son. It was very difficult thing for me to do because I'm not really that adventurous. I had never tried to do something like this. In a way, I just wanted to turn around and go back. I had this dream in which I was being pursued by red, bloodied rats. It was very powerful dream, and when I woke up the train had stopped in the Alps. It was at night. I had never felt that way. It was a crucial night in my life. So, I was just haunted by that image for years, about being pursued by these big, red rats.

Then I try to take these images and try to find what the source for them are. All this is unconscious, all this takes a long time. I'm not in that much control of it. In the case of *A Rat's Mass*, there was a connection to my brother. At that time my brother was in an automobile accident, from which he subsequently died. This evoked an almost unreal memory of when we were children we used to play in the attic and there used to be a closet in the floor of the attic. I didn't like to go up there by myself because I would imagine that there would be something in that closet.

In *Cities In Bezique,* the character of Clara Passmore was a composite of my aunt and my mother and, of course, myself. Clara was very much my aunt's life. She was this girl who grew up in a small Georgia town. She was quite brilliant. Her father was white. She came to live with us when I was in high school. They wanted her to go to school in Cleveland because they figured she was so smart. This was many, many years ago—more than twenty-five years ago she got her Masters at Teacher's College at Columbia. She teaches English somewhere in the South now. I used to listen to her talk a lot. She was very hysterical. I haven't seen her for many years now, but what struck me as a child—as a young person, not necessarily as a child—was how she used to talk, how she didn't belong anywhere. She's very much a basis to that girl in *The Owl Answers,* and my mother also, in a different way, talks about things like that.

Yes, those two people did have a very big influence on me; they both are very articulate and, in different ways, both are very pretty. Somehow, it always struck me, unconsciously, what a tragedy that these very pretty women seemed so tormented. So of course I used them as a model.

I was always interested in English literature and I've traveled in England. There's always been a fascination with Queen Victoria. It always seemed to amaze

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It's very easy for me to fall into fantasy.

me that one person could have a whole era named after them. I find the obsession with royalty fascinating. Not only Queen Victoria, but other great historical literary figures such as Patrice Lamumba and, it's obvious, Jesus Christ. Well, I took these people, which became a pattern in *The Owl Answers,* and then used them to represent different points of view—metaphors really.

Obviously there was always great confusion in my own mind of where I belonged, if anywhere. It's not such a preoccupation now, since I see myself as a writer I don't worry about the rest of it anymore.

I first had my plays done in the early sixties and, as a result, I'm really a product of that time of when *Zoo Story* and *American Dream* were the models of success. I studied with Edward Albee at one point, just after I had written *Funny House of a Negro.* I would never have even gone for the one-act, except for the fact that everyone was going to see *Zoo Story* and because I was not happy with any of the three-acts I had written up to that point. I couldn't seem to sustain the power and still can't seem to write really long, huge works.

I admire Tennessee Williams and Garcia Lorca, and I struggled for a long time to write plays—as typified by *Funny House*—in which the person is in conflict with their inner forces, with the conflicting sides to their personality, which I found to be my own particular, greatest conflict. I am a relatively quiet person who just mulls over all these things and, in a sense, it was an attempt to articulate that—your inner conflicts. I had worked for a long time before I did *Funny House* on having people in a room with conflicts. I was very much in awe of Tennessee Williams at the time and so I imitated him. Somehow it just didn't work. It didn't have any power. I just didn't believe it when I read it. Starting with *Funny House,* I finally came up with this one character, Sarah, who, rather than talk to her father or mother, talked with these people she created about her problems. It's very easy for me to fall into fantasy.

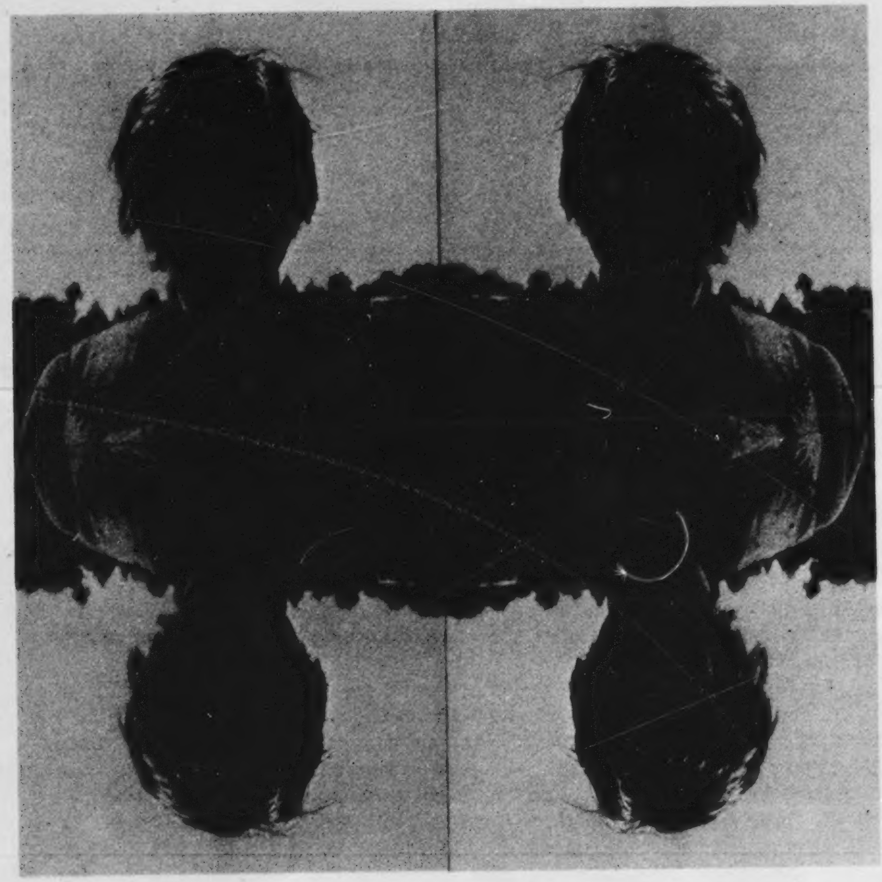
Most people seem to feel that *Funny House of a Negro* is still my most powerful play. Of course I find that depressing, seeing that I wrote that over sixteen years ago. But *Funny House* was a build-up of an idea I had been working on for over five years. Finally that idea just suddenly exploded. The subsequent plays were ideas that I had been trying to work on in my twenties, but then they just suddenly came at the same time, because all those plays were written quite close together. They all came out eleven months to a year from the time *Funny House* came out. All

those plays are a product of ideas I've been working on from the time I was twenty-five to thirty. I was struggling with those ideas for a long time. Once I found a way to express them in *Funny House,* I think that was when I found a technique. I employed that technique for the rest.

Transcribed and edited by Lisa Lehman from a recorded interview.

Visualization, Language and the Inner Library

by Sam Shepard



Sam

Ideas emerge from plays—not the other way around.

I feel a lot of reluctance in attempting to describe any part of a process which, by its truest nature, holds an unending mystery. At the same time I'm hoping that by trying to formulate some of this territory I can make certain things clearer to myself.

I've always felt that the term "experimental" in regard to theatre forms has been twisted by the intellectual community surrounding the artist to the extent that now even the artist has lost track of its original essence. In other words, a search for "new forms" doesn't seem to be exactly where it's at.

There comes a point where the exterior gyrations are no longer the most interesting aspect of what you're practicing, and brand-new exploration starts to take root. For example: In the writing of a particular character where does the character take shape? In my experience the character is visualized, he appears out of nowhere in three dimensions and speaks. He doesn't speak to me because I'm not in the play. I'm watching it. He speaks to something or someone else, or even to himself, or even to no one.

I'm talking now about an open-ended structure where anything could happen as opposed to a carefully planned and regurgitated event which, for me, has always been as painful as pissing nickels. There are writers who work this way successfully, and I admire them and all that, but I don't see the point exactly. The reason I began writing plays was the hope of extending the sensation of *play* (as in "kid") on into adult life. If "play" becomes "labor," why play?

Anyway, to veer back to visualization—right here is where the experiment starts. With the very first impulse to see something happen on a stage. Any stage. This impulse is mistakenly called an idea by those who have never experienced it. I can't even count how many times I've heard the line, "Where did the idea for this play come from?" I never can answer it because it seems totally back-assward. Ideas emerge from plays—not the other way around.

I don't mean to make this sound like a magic act or a mystical experience. It has nothing to do with hallucination or drugs or meditation. These things may all have an influence on the general picture, but they aren't the picture itself. The picture is moving in the mind and being allowed to move more and more freely as you follow it. The following of it is the writing part. In other words, I'm taking notes in as much detail as possible on an event that's happening somewhere inside me. The extent to which I can actually follow the picture and not intervene with my own two-cents worth is where inspiration and craftsmanship hold their real meaning. If I find myself pushing the character in a certain direction, it's almost always a sure sign that I've fallen back on technique and lost the real thread of the thing.

This isn't to say that it's possible to write on nothing but a wave of inspired vision. There has to be some kind of common ground between the accumulated knowledge of what you know how to do (because you've done it before) and the completely foreign country that always demands a new expression. I've never written a play that didn't require both ends of the stick.

Another part of this that interests me is: How is this inner visualizing different from ordinary daydreaming or ordinary nightdreaming? The difference seems to lie in the idea of a "watcher" being engaged while writing, whereas ordinarily this watcher is absent. I'm driving a truck and daydreaming about myself in Mexico, but, in this case, I'm not really seeing the dream that's taking place. If I start to see it, then it might become a play.

Now, another thing comes into focus. It must be true that we're continuously taking in images of experience from the outside world through our senses, even when we're not aware of it. How else could whole scenes from our past which we thought we'd long forgotten suddenly spring up in living technicolor? These tastes

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from our life must then be stored away somewhere in some kind of inner library. So this must mean that if I could be truly resourceful, I could draw on this library at any given moment for the exact information I needed. Not only that, but the information is then given back to me as a living sensation. From this point of view, I'm diving back into the actual experience of having been there and writing from it as though it's happening now.

This is very similar to the method-acting technique called "recall." It's a good description—I'm recalling the thing itself. The similarity between the actor's art and the playwright's is a lot closer than most people suspect. In fact the playwright is the only actor who gets to play all the parts. The danger of this method from the actor's point of view is that he becomes lost in the dream and forgets about the audience. The same holds true for the writer, but the writer doesn't really realize where he became lost until he sees an audience nodding out through what he'd thought were his most blazing passages.

This brings me down to words. Words as tools of imagery in motion. I have a feeling that the cultural environment one is raised in predetermines a rhythmical relationship to the use of words. In this sense, I can't be anything other than an American writer.

I noticed though, after living in England for three straight years, that certain subtle changes occurred in this rhythmic construction. In order to accommodate these new configurations in the way a sentence would overblow itself (as is the English tendency), I found myself adding English characters to my plays. *Geography of a Horse Dreamer* was written in London, and there's only one truly American character in the play.

If I'm right inside the character in the moment, I can catch what he smells, sees, feels and touches.

My attitude was that if the play had faults . . . any attempt to correct them was cheating.

Still, the power of words for me isn't so much in the delineation of a character's social circumstances as it is in the capacity to evoke visions in the eye of the audience. American Indian poetry (in its simplest translation) is a prime example. The roots of this poetry stem from a religious belief in the word itself. Like "crow." Like "hawk." Words as living incantations and not as symbols. Taken in this way, the organization of living, breathing words as they hit the air between the actor and the audience actually possesses the power to change our chemistry. Still, the critical assessment of this kind of event is almost always relegated to the categories of symbolism or "surrealism" or some other accepted niche. In other words, it's removed from the living and dedicated to the dead.

I seem to have come around now to the ear as opposed to the eye, but actually they work in conjunction with each other. They seem to be joined in moments of heightened perception. I hear the phrase a lot that this or that writer has a "great ear for language." What this usually means is that the writer has an openness to people's use of language in the outside world and then this is recorded and reproduced exactly as it's heard. This is no doubt a great gift, but it seems to fall way short of our overall capacity to listen. If I only hear the sounds that people make, how much sound am I leaving out? Words, at best, can only give a partial glimpse into the total world of sensate experience, but how much of that total world am I letting myself in for when I approach writing?

The structure of any art form immediately implies limitation. I'm narrowing down my field of vision. I'm agreeing to work within certain boundaries. So I have to be very careful how those boundaries are defined at the outset. Language, then, seems to be the only ingredient in this plan that retains the potential of making leaps into the unknown. There's only so much I can do with appearances. Change the costume, add a new character, change the light, bring in objects, shift the set,

but language is always hovering right in there, ready to move faster and more effectively than all the rest of it put together. It's like pulling out a .38 when someone faces you with a knife.

Language can explode from the tiniest impulse. If I'm right inside the character in the moment, I can catch what he smells, sees, feels and touches. In a sudden flash, he opens his eyes, and the words follow. In these lightning-like eruptions words are not thought, they're felt. They cut through space and make perfect sense without having to hesitate for the "meaning."

From time to time I've practiced Jack Kerouac's discovery of jazz-sketching with words. Following the exact same principles as a musician does when he's jamming. After periods of this kind of practice, I begin to get the haunting sense that something in me writes but it's not necessarily me. At least it's not the "me" that takes credit for it. This identical experience happened to me once when I was playing drums with The Holy Modal Rounders, and it scared the shit out of me. Peter Stampfel, the fiddle player explained it as being visited by the Holy Ghost, which sounded reasonable enough at the time.

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It seems that the more you write the harder it gets because you're not so easily fooled by yourself anymore.

What I'm trying to get at here is that the real quest of a writer is to penetrate into another world. A world behind the form. The contradiction is that as soon as that world opens up, I tend to run the other way. It's scary because I can't answer to it from what I know.

Now, here's the big rub—it's generally accepted in the scholarly world that a playwright deals with *"ideas."* That idea in itself has been inherited by us as though it were originally written in granite from above and nobody, but nobody, better mess with it. The problem for me with this concept is that its adherents are almost always referring to ideas which speak only to the mind and leave out completely the body, the emotions and all the rest of it.

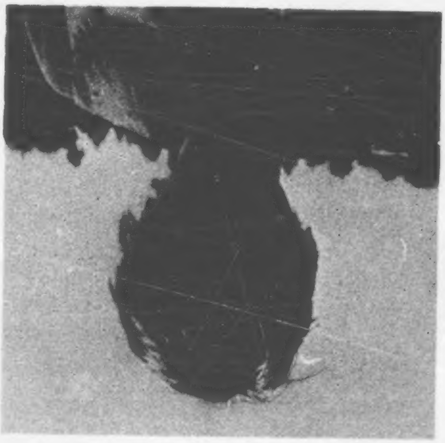
Myth speaks to everything at once, especially the emotions. By myth I mean a sense of mystery and not necessarily a traditional formula. A character for me is a composite of different mysteries. He's an unknown quantity. If he wasn't, it would be like coloring in the numbered spaces. I see an old man by a broken car in the middle of nowhere and those simple elements right away set up associations and yearnings to pursue what he's doing there.

. . . the playwright is the only actor who gets to play all the parts.

The character of Crow in *Tooth of Crime* came from a yearning toward violence. A totally lethal human with no way or reason for tracing how he got that way. He just appeared. He spit words that became his weapons. He doesn't "mean" anything. He's simply following his most savage instincts. He speaks in an unheard-of tongue. He needed a victim, so I gave him one. He devoured him just like he was supposed to. When you're writing inside of a character like this, you aren't pausing every ten seconds to figure out what it all means. If you do, you lose the whole shot, because the character isn't going to hang around waiting for you. He's moving.

I write fast because that's the way it happens with me. Sometimes long stretches happen in between where I don't write for weeks. But when I start, I don't stop. Writing is born from a need. A deep burn. If there's no need, there's no writing.

I don't mean to give the impression from all this that a playwright isn't responsible toward the audience. He is. But which audience? An imagined one or a real one? The only real audience he has at the moment of writing is himself. Only later does the other audience come into it. At that point he begins to see the correspondence or lack of it between his own "watching" and the watching of others.



I used to be dead set against rewriting on any level. My attitude was that if the play had faults, those faults were part and parcel of the original process, and that any attempt to correct them was cheating. Like a sculptor sneaking out in the night with his chisel and chipping little pieces off his work or gluing them back on.

After a while this rigid "holy-art" concept began to crumble. It was no longer a case of "correction," as though what I was involved with was some kind of definitive term paper. I began to see that the living outcome (the production) always demanded a different kind of attention than the written form that it sprang from. The spoken word, no matter how you cut it, is different than the written word. It happens in a different space, under different circumstances and demands a different set of laws.

Action is the only play I've written where I spoke each line out loud to myself before I put it down on paper. To me that play still comes the closest to sounding on stage exactly like it was written. This method doesn't work for every play, though, since it necessarily sets up a slower tempo. It just happened to be the right approach for that particular piece.

La Turista was the first play I ever rewrote, under the urging of Jacques Levy, who directed it. We were in the second week of rehearsals at the American Place Theatre when I walked in with a brand-new second act. It's a tribute to Wynn Handman that he allowed this kind of procedure to take place. That was the first taste I got of regarding theatre as an ongoing process. I could feel the whole evolution of that play from a tiny sweltering hotel in the Yucatan, half wasted with the trots, to a full-blown production in New York City. Most of the writing in that piece was hatched from a semidelirious state of severe dysentery. What the Mexicans call "La Turista" or "Montezuma's Revenge." In that state any writing I could manage seemed valid, no matter how incoherent it might seem to an outside eye. Once it hit the stage in rehearsals and I was back to a fairly healthy physical condition, the whole thing seemed filled with an overriding self-pity. The new second act came more from desperation than anything else.

I think immediate environments tend to play a much heavier role on my writing than I'm aware of most of the time. That is, the physical place I'm in at the time of sitting down to the machine. In New York I could write any time in any place. It didn't matter what was happening in the streets below or the apartment above. I just wrote. The funny thing is that I can remember the exact place and time of every play. Even the people I was with. It's almost as though the plays were kind of chronicle I was keeping on myself.

It seems that the more you write, the harder it gets, because you're not so easily fooled by yourself anymore. I can still sit down and whip off a play like I used to, but it doesn't have the same meaning now as it did when I was nineteen. Even so, writing becomes more and more interesting as you go along, and it starts to open up some of its secrets. One thing I'm sure of, though. That I'll never get to the bottom of it.

Two Pages A Day

by Megan Terry

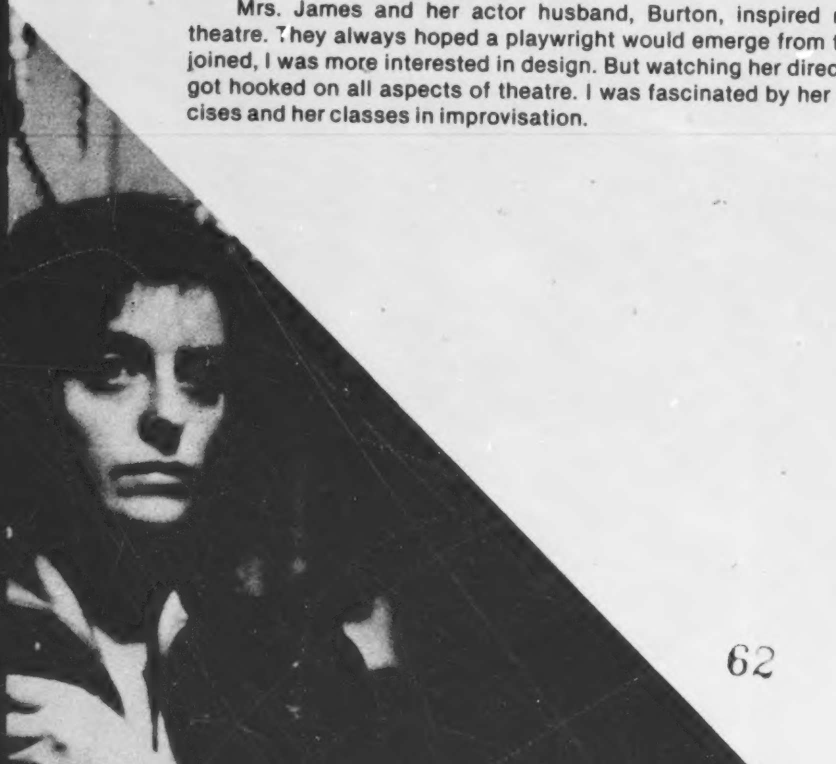
Megan Terry

The act of writing gives me almost as much pleasure as lovemaking.

I was bused to the theatre at the age of seven. There was a program, sponsored by the Junior League, to bring children to live theatre. I lived in a small fishing village outside of Seattle; it was a long bus ride, but it changed my life. Professional actors, who had worked together for twenty years under the direction of Mrs. Florence Bean James (who had studied with Stanislavsky) were playing *Rumplestiltskin*. That was it. I fell in love.

As soon as I was allowed to go about on my own (fourteen), I went back to that theatre and hung around and begged to clean johns and sort nuts and bolts until they took me into the company.

Mrs. James and her actor husband, Burton, inspired me to write for the theatre. They always hoped a playwright would emerge from their theatre. When I joined, I was more interested in design. But watching her direct and teach acting, I got hooked on all aspects of theatre. I was fascinated by her sense-memory exercises and her classes in improvisation.



Watching improvisations, I saw that the actors would be sometimes marvelous; the improvisation would be more real than life, but it was also fragile—difficult to repeat and keep that "living" quality. I started to try to write down some of the improvisations with the thought that if the structure could be secured and dialog written the actors could have a tighter scenario and be relieved of the "playwriting" part of their work. They would be freer to fly in their art. And the improvisation could stay fresh. This wasn't so easy to do, and I think it took me ten years of trying before I got good at it.

In college and on my own, I studied fine arts, theatrical design and costume. I was swept away for a time by the Collageists. I believe the experience of working in collage for five years influenced the way I put plays together later on. I think of "building" or "making" a play.

I bought a lot of wire "in" and "out" boxes at the Salvation Army, and each is loaded with notes. Sometimes these notes turn into plays, and sometimes I have to empty them into larger boxes marked "notes." I have many cards with possible titles stashed in drawers around the house.

Sometimes a title comes first, sometimes last, sometimes that's all that comes. I buy pens by the gross. Notepads are in every room, pocket, purse. There is always paper in the typewriter.

I write a lot from life. I *listen* to characters and write down what they say. They usually surprise me. The way people speak is music to me. I collect language. I've

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trained my ear over the years, both out of pleasure and a desire to save what I'm hearing. I imagine I can hear the inner person via the rhythms of a person's sentence structure. I try to be as faithful as I can to individual rhythms when I'm writing.

I love to write. The act of writing gives me almost as much pleasure as lovemaking. I can write as long as my energy holds out—sometimes two days and nights at a time, sometimes eight to ten hours, sometimes only two pages, then I take a nap, wake up, drink a giant cup of Irish breakfast tea with a cinnamon stick and write twenty-four more hours.

I have a one-inch-by-two-inch section of masking tape on the left-hand side of my typewriter. I have written on the tape "Two Pages." That means to me that my only requirement to earn bread and board and to be relieved of guilt for each day of my life, all I have to hand in to myself, is two pages of new material. It may be on anything, but notebook writing doesn't count. It must be writing that can actually be worked into a now or future play. When I have a deadline to meet, either one of my own or one commissioned, I up the number of pages from five to ten to twenty. Two pages a day, two times 365, adds up to enough pages for anyone.

Typing is an unnatural act. I got "D" in typing in high school. When I realized later on that I was more into writing than design, acting or directing, I had to relearn typing. Not an easy job. I'm athletically coordinated, but I couldn't type. Why? I still don't know. It was necessary for me to conquer this mechanical defect, or I could never have moved ahead as a writer. I have memories of banging my head on the typewriter and crying from frustration and anger at my ineptness. This was the basis of early writing blocks. But I found the writing was always there, ready to show itself on the page if I could only get the mechanical problems out of the way. The only thing to solve it was to force myself to take junk jobs in insurance companies and engineering firms as a temporary typist to build my speed. This worked, but took longer than I thought.

That pain is all behind me now. I have since beaten to death one Royal and two Olympias. Now I have a strong IBM Selectric at home and another in the lighting booth at the theatre. I go to work with the actors and do the warm-up exercises with them, then go up to the lighting booth to write scenes for whatever play we're into—usually at the rate of a scene a day or every two days, depending on how much research is involved. This is in addition to the personal assignments I have given myself or outside commissions from other groups. The act of writing is no longer a pain, but now a physical joy akin to hang gliding.

Cappuccino first thing in the morning. I jump into sweat clothes and take the dogs to the park. Back inside, a long hot shower; then I choose clothing according to what I plan to write. For aggressive scenes, blue jeans; for tender scenes, love scenes, I dress in silk.

After the first burst of writing, it's time to start dinner for the company. I usually cook a giant soup or stew for the members of our household every three of four days. I think of my main career as that of a cook. Writing occurs in between stirring and chopping, serving, and watching my friends eat. After the soup or stew is started, I move back and forth from the typewriter to the stove, stirring, tasting, adding spices, more vegetables, experimenting with lower and lower heat.

I never stop working on a show we have in performance or in our permanent repertoire because I am always learning new things about the piece from the audience. I cut, add, or rewrite after consultation with our director Jo Ann Schmidman and the company. I stop working on the *written* text once a play is published, but if new editions come out, I incorporate any changes we've developed that will, in my opinion, make the play play better.

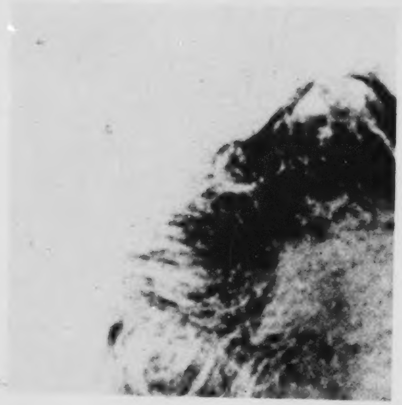
Now we are doing developmental work for a play, a rock samba musical I'm writing, set in Brazil. The first impulse to write this show came from an interview Janis Joplin gave to the press. She had gone to Brazil for Mardi Gras, hitchhiked up the coast of Brazil, and somehow kicked junk. No one knows anything else about that period in her life. I put on her records again today and try to write drafts of scenes that have her beat as their basis.

A Reinvention of Form

by Jean-Claude van Itallie

Jean-Claude van Itallie

When I write a play there's no single sure track to run on. It's different each time I start. Each time is starting from scratch, a reinvention of form. There may be easier ways to do it, but for me, that's how it is. There are no rules that always apply. If I teach a playwriting class, I set up exercises, so people can learn some possible different approaches. I would be loathe to prescribe one single approach.



As you catch me just about to start something—which is always a peculiar time for a writer—I find it even more difficult to tell you how I go about things.

In a sense, each good new play is a new language. A play is the expression of a new way of seeing, not only because you've decided to see things in a new way, but because you are seeing something clearly, being who you are right then. There's a discrepancy between your point of view and the way that, say, the audience is accustomed to seeing. It's called "new" more by them than by you. You have to find the language with which to express the particular vision you have of ordinary reality. It may seem to you to be absolute common sense and obvious, but often the more obvious it seems to you, the more "new" it will seem to the world.

People's everyday perception of reality is usually fairly narrow. I mean, an artist perceives reality with a wider and more intense vision. When he focuses on a situation, or people, or whatever he or she is choosing to focus on, then he's seeing it "differently," although he might quite properly say to himself that he's seeing it more accurately. Then he expresses his vision with whatever craft he has available.

Usually I start with an image of some kind. I had better be conscious of that image, because even if I'm not conscious of it, I'm still starting with an image. It's what I call in class the "what" of it: the impulse that's behind any play. I wrote a play called *The King of the United States.* All the time I was working on it I had in my mind the empty streets of Harvard Square and a little guy running around in those streets. I think that that play had some formal problems because I didn't carefully fix that image before I started.

Some people start with characters; with me, it's often a place. I'm very moved by space—the architecture of a space. Sometimes I can work from the idea of a space with characters in it. Sometimes I work from an abstract place, almost like a musical form. I did that in my play *Interview*, where you could practically map it out: AB, ABC, ABCD, AABCD, AABBCD, AABBCCD, etc.; it was more or less a fugal structure. I am turned on by that—I guess you could call it the "architectonic" approach. In a way, the "how you get into the play" is half of writing the play. Not the entirety, but the main push.

Each word is important. I'm a words-person . . .

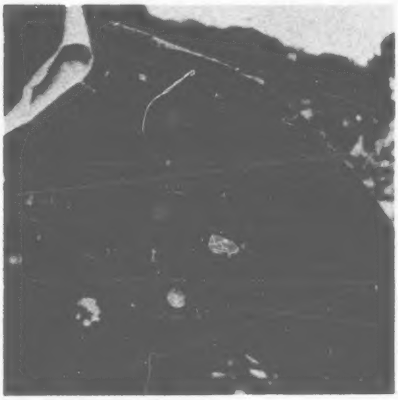
Years ago I wrote the play *Motel*. I started with a feeling of great anger. I was really angry, angry that nobody had been liking my three-act conventional plays that were trying to please everybody. Along with an image of the tearing apart of a room, there was an almost sexual energy going. All of me was involved in wanting to tear down, wanting to break through, wanting to show those feelings. I had an image of a gross motel room with gross people tearing it apart, and I proceeded from there. I also heard a woman's voice in my mind, going from soft to sharp, and I put the image and the voice together without trying to be too literally logical.

A play is always going to reflect, some way or another, where I am in my mind. I'm being fed all the time. I'm being fed more than I actually give out. It seems to me I have a lot of input. I travel. I visit different worlds in different ways, books or actual worlds. I live half the time in the country and half the time in the city, and some time in between teaching at different places. (For instance, I teach each year at the Naropa Institute in Colorado.) If I didn't have input, it would be impossible to write anything.

In the last play that I was writing—a short play that I wrote last spring, which I'm not very satisfied with but which I think may lead me to other plays—I was very involved with space and time. I think everyone that is writing seriously probably is these days. I did a good deal of reading, and would read aloud with the person I was working with, or have him read aloud to me. (I worked with a secretary. I think in part that was an indulgence, because I don't like so much being alone, and on the other hand, I do like having control, so having somebody there who's my assistant, rather than working with a group of actors, seemed to help that. I had been doing Chekhov translations, and for working on Chekhov translations I found it was better to work aloud. So I dictate to him, and he reads back, and then I reshape.) We read Einstein and other people writing about time, using that to feed the play, which is called *About Time,* and which takes place in three different places simultaneously.

But you can't just go along with an abstract form or you could end up with something cold, formally correct but inhuman. A lot of how you work depends on the distance you have from your material. If you get too close to the material you can drown in it; if you get too far from it, that will be felt in the material as coldness. So much has to do with how far you are from what you're working on.

. . .if you play with form, as I do, you have a responsibility to be clear.



I think anyone who chooses to write for the theatre is choosing to work alone and choosing to work not alone.

Also you have to find the right part of yourself to work from. If you work from a very soupy part of yourself, you'll turn out stuff which is sentimental. If you work only from anger—or, say, anger and intelligence—you'll get something which can be political in a narrow sense, but not have any real human reverberations.

It's easier to say what not to do. When you actually click into the proper distance and the proper place in yourself, you know it. Then it becomes a question of staying there long enough to get your play written. It's not that I do a specific thing in order to find that place in myself. But I keep trying to remain a proper conduit for whatever it is that I'm feeling coming up through the earth and that I'm trying to record.

All the time that I'm working on plays I'm also working on myself. For instance, I'm learning now how to sing, how to literally "find my own voice." In singing too you learn what *not* to do. You don't squeeze up in the chest, and you don't squeeze up at the back of the throat. You learn to allow the breath to follow its proper pattern; if I'd learned to leave it alone as a child I wouldn't have any problem. I also have meditative techniques that I use in my living, and my living and working aren't so different. I've been involved with meditative disciplines for a decade; I don't think I'd be feeling as well today if I hadn't.

I'm always setting up a discipline for myself. I very much admire Thomas Mann, who was able to get up every day, one hears, and work for several hours a day, every day, at the same time. I do try to find and keep a particular discipline for

One of the great problems in a play . . . is remembering what you were intending to write about.

each particular project. Sometimes my discipline is quite strong. Sometimes a lot of childish neuroses come into play. But I think a discipline of a certain amount of work a day, a schedule, is an excellent idea. I think that the more one is able to plan one and stick to it, the more power one has. But there's no point punishing oneself for not sticking to a schedule. Self-punishment is neurotic.

One thing I do a lot is rewrite. I tend to write more than I need. I write eight, nine, ten times more than I need in the end. I comb it. I curry it. I get out all the inessentials. Recently I've been reading and writing *haiku,* trying to say only what's necessary. That doesn't mean that what I write isn't colorful or humorous, but it's direct.

Especially if you play with form, as I do, you have a responsibility to be clear. The more "experimental" your form is, the more unexpected, the more it needs to be clear to yourself, and therefore clear to your audience. Part of that reach for clarity is the currying and the combing through, the editing.

I worked long and hard on the speeches for *The Fable,* which I wrote two or three years ago. I think of those speeches as poetry. When I worked on *The Serpent,* I didn't realize that what I was writing was poetry until it came time for the play to be published, until I began rearranging the lines. Each word is important. I'm a words-person, and I feel that the words must rise out of the entire body and mind.

If I'm working by myself, there's one whole set of possibilities. If, as in the past, I work with a group, then there's another set of possibilities. I think anyone who chooses to write for the theatre is choosing to work alone and choosing to work not alone. Writing for the theatre is writing in a social and an immediate form. I think there is always that ambivalence with somebody who is a theatre writer; I express it by working sometimes with a group and mostly not.

The Fable had the form of a journey. It was a question of finding which states of mind, which were metaphorized as places, were important for the journeyer to visit. It was nice to be on a journey with a lot of other people. I wrote the outline first, and several scenes, and then I got together with the director and actors. I think perhaps *The Fable* gained in intensity from being worked on with actors and lost in terms of its story logic.

The advantage of working with a group is that you break through a lot of holding on to things, a lot of ego barriers. Having written something, you don't hold on to it as long because someone will tell you, "This doesn't work," or you'll see that obviously it doesn't work.

One of the great problems in a play, particularly in an ambitious play, is remembering what you were intending to write about. You can deviate from that either because you can have looked at it so many times that it becomes trite to you, or because you think momentarily something else is more interesting. I tend to go off on a thousand different tangents. Working with a group keeps me on a track—a creative track, not a rut-track. If you're working with very good people, the original

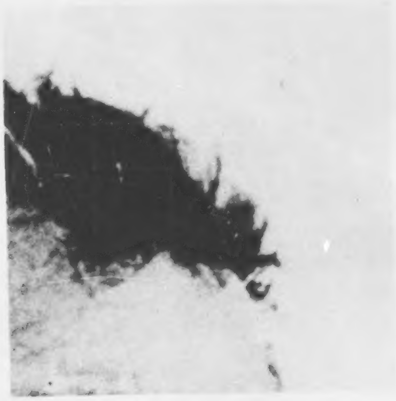
. . .I don't know how I write a play. I just do it.

impulse is always held on to by someone. If you drop the ball at one moment, then the others will convey to you what is necessary by some emotional state that they can portray; then you remember what it's about. Or they forget, and you remember by restating the structure or giving new words when they're on the wrong track.

One thing I do a lot is rewrite. I tend to write more than I need.

On the other hand, of course, working alone, one has complete freedom. I can write what I want; nobody's there to tell me that they can use it or they can't. The disadvantage of working with a group is that they can all put in their two cents, sometimes unnecessarily. The actors also have to give up a lot of ego. They have to stop thinking that if they portray a particular emotion on a stage even without words that it's perfect as it is; they have to allow it to be put into an agreed-upon context. Sometimes the actors don't let go, and sometimes the writer doesn't let go, and then it's very hard. It's hard anyway to create a piece with a group.

There's a mistaken belief, in the contemporary theatre—one that I hope is getting less prevalent—that a group of actors can create a piece by themselves, which to me is like having a body without a head. It's impossible. You have to have a strong writer and a strong director, or a strong writer-director. Someone has to function as the leader of the work. A non-hierarchized group will produce only chaos. I don't think it's going on so much any more, but people used to try to do pseudo-Grotowski work or pseudo-Open Theatre work, thinking that they could come together and make "something," a group effort. But unless there is an acknowledged head to a group, a writer and a director, it won't work.



Quality is something that can't be quantified. You've got to be your own judge of quality when you're writing a play. You're refining your ear all the time. When I'm reading aloud something I've just written, either into a tape to play to somebody later, or directly to somebody, (which is a later stage) I find myself anticipating certain parts; I'm really going to enjoy playing those characters or reading those stage directions, or whatever. Then I know that part is good. If I find myself wanting to skip over something or apologize, "Please don't pay too much attention to this part," then I know it probably should be cut. In this way I myself know what's good or bad. I can't always manage to make it better—in fact, usually I can't make it as good as I want to—but I do develop a sense of "it's right" or "it's wrong." So, finally, my writing is for the voice. I'm very interested in the voice. I prefer words spoken aloud to reading them on the page.

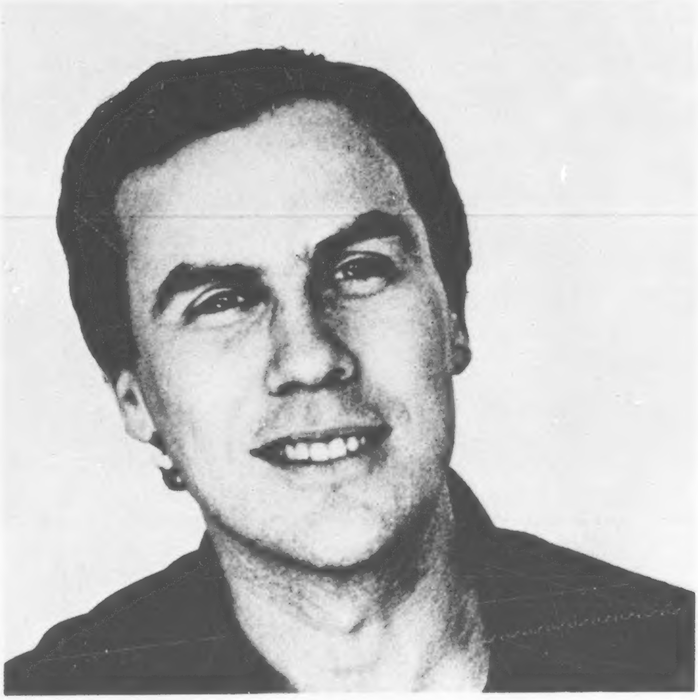
In fact, at this point in my life, I can foresee over the next decade—if I'm doing theatre at all, which I'm always questioning—that I would like to perform and to direct, as well as to write. I am discouraged with the notion of the writer as a head without a body. I think that what you write has to come from your entire self. You can't leave your mind behind, or your body.

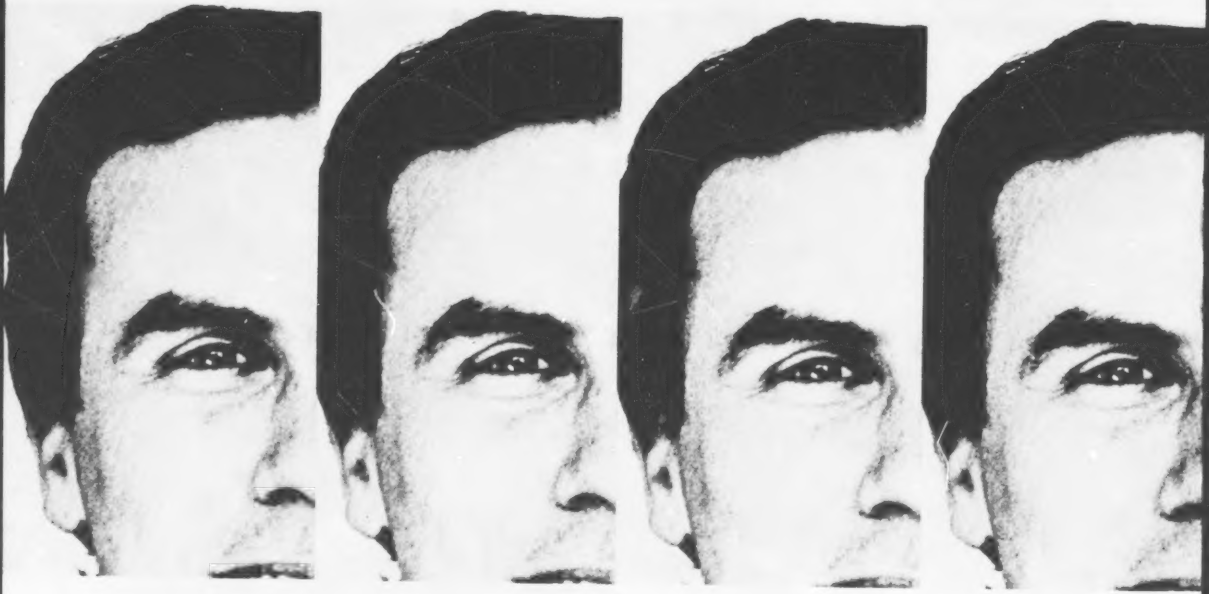
Finally, I don't know how I write a play. I just do it. I think if you push any writer to the wall, or any artist to the wall, they'll tell you finally, "Well, I just do it." That doesn't mean that they haven't practiced a technique, or many different techniques, for a long time so that they can "just do it." You know, it's like *Zen in the Art* *of Archery*. You shoot an arrow a hundred thousand times, and each time it's not quite right, and then on the hundred thousandth time, when you're just about to give up, you shoot the arrow once again and it just happens to be right. So it's not that one doesn't need technique, but there's also a leaping quality, a jumping into it and doing it. I don't, while I'm jumping into it and doing it, intellectualize how. Having pulled the string of the bow back a hundred thousand times, I'm not saying to myself the hundred thousandth time, "Now you take the bow, pull it back . . . ." I don't know what I'm saying to myself. I'm just doing it. I'm taking the bow, putting the arrow there, and letting go. That's the time it "works." What "works," in the end, is very important, and I know it works when I read it aloud. If the music isn't correct then I have to adjust it to make it flow more easily. If you asked a composer how he does that sort of thing, I don't know what he would say to you either. Finally, there is that point in creativity which cannot be explained.

Edited and transcribed by Bill Simmer from a recorded interview.

. . . I thought I was hallucinating
hallucinating

by Robert Wilson





I began writing *I was sitting on my patio this guy appeared I thought I was hallucinating* a few days after the final performance of *Einstein on the Beach* in November of 1976.

I wrote a few pages of dialog at a time in a large notebook with blank pages that I often write and draw in when working on a piece. The language I wrote was more a reflection of the way we think than of the way we normally speak. My head became like a TV, switching from thought to thought (and in writing from phrase to phrase) like flipping a dial from channel to channel.

I write when I am alone and work best when there are no interruptions. I sometimes keep a television on at low volume and incorporate phrases I hear into my text, which I write quickly, usually leaving it untouched and in its original order once the words are on the page. Every few days I had a few pages of writing typed up.

A few weeks later I began making sketches, often on long rolls of paper (as well as in my notebook), of the image I was thinking of using for a basic stage set. I made about twenty-five drawings a day for two weeks, sometimes making slight alterations in them. I often follow a similar procedure before arriving at a final im-

I am always concerned with how the total stage picture looks at any given moment.

age used as a model for scenery. Christina Giannini and I worked together on translating the image into actual scenery, which she then built.

I continued to write dialog while making the set designs. Film and sound cues were written in as I wrote. The play was structured in two acts of equal length for which the material was very similar but treated in a very unlike manner by two performers, each to direct his or her respective act. When the last few pages of the verbal script had been typed up, the two cast members, Lucinda Childs and myself, were each given a copy for memorization. (The play was not necessarily written for a man, Act I, and a woman Act II. It could just as well be performed by a woman, Act I, and a man, Act II, as by two women or two men.)

I knew at the outset that the play was intended to be performed on a small proscenium stage and that the basic image for both acts would be the interior of a room having three tall narrow windows in its black back wall. For the short prolog to each act the windows would be "open" with bright "daylight" behind them casting long diagonal shadows and shafts of light across the room, silhouetting the performers and tracing the parts of the body with light. In contrast to this, for the main part of each act, the windows would be filled in with bookshelves, making the room much darker.

Shortly after Lucinda was given her script, she memorized a good part of it and began blocking her movements. I watched her develop the material for a month before I began blocking my own movements. My part was then fashioned in complementary contrast to hers.

During that first month of rehearsal I memorized my lines and finalized the set drawings. Originally I had considered having a backdrop of a wave behind the windows. I later decided on a solid white backdrop, giving the illusion of vast space, accompanied during the Act I prolog by silence and the Act II prolog by an audiotape of waves. I decided to have the last few lines of dialog repeated at the end of Act II. These lines, in conjunction with movements, would become an epilog, during which the room would become light-filled again, the bookcases and back wall having each slowly disappeared. The sequence of the prologs, acts, and epilog thus became the following:

1 *Black/White*
2 *Black*
3 *Black/White*
4 *Black*
5 *White*

We rehearsed in a loft using makeshift furniture the same dimensions as the chaise lounge, shelf, and telephone table that I was designing at the time and which were to be the only set pieces on stage. The only two props were a wineglass and a telephone. Shortly after I began blocking movements and gestures for my act (Act I), we began holding weekly open rehearsals.

During the earlier rehearsals Alan Lloyd, who had read the script a number of times, began composing the score. About halfway through I suggested he might write the rest from the end to the middle, which is what happened. By the time open rehearsals started, we were using a cassette tape that was cued to the dialog and played very softly. The music for Act I was piano, and that for Act II, clavichord. James Neu, who also did the voice-overs, was largely responsible for the coordination between dialog and music.

My head became like a TV, switching from thought to thought . . . like flipping a dial from channel to channel.

I am always concerned with how the total stage picture looks at any given moment. The placement and design (shape, proportion, materials) of furniture, the color, fabric, and design of costumes, placement and content of film, paths and gestures of performers, and lighting were all major considerations, no less important than the dialog or music. The details of the furniture, costumes, and film content were arrived at after the overall image had been finalized, their selection being based, in part, on the mood and architecture of the setting (stage set, dialog, music and characters) we had begun to establish.

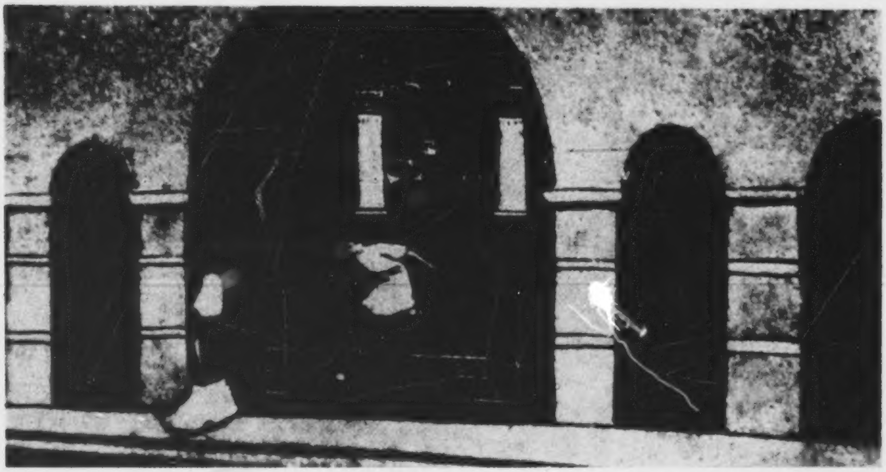
Sologub and the Theatre

by Daniel Gerould

Fydor Sologub (pronounced Sulagoup, with the stress on the last syllable) is best known as a poet and novelist, famous for his elegant, musical verse and for his grotesque fictional masterpiece, *The Petty Demon.* Born in 1863 and a member of the first generation of Russian symbolists, Sologub—a man of proletarian origins whose real name was Teternikov—was almost forty-five when he wrote his first play and had already been active in the literary world for over twenty years. Yet at this point the shy and withdrawn poet embarked upon a new career in the theatre and became a major symbolist dramatist and theoretician of a new stagecraft.

In 1906 Sologub met Meyerhold who was then just beginning his work as a director at Kommissarzhevskaya's Theatre in St. Petersburg. The two men shared a number of the same ideas and soon became friends and associates, determined to carry out many joint projects. As a result of this meeting, Sologub, while continuing to write both poetry and fiction, was to devote a good deal of his creative energies during the next fifteen years to the theatre, composing more than a dozen original plays as well as preparing adaptations and translations and writing essays about the stage. Sologub was, above all, not simply a literary man who wrote plays, but a poet in the theatre, intimately concerned with the actual staging of his works and eager to challenge existing notions of theatrical performance, which he felt were inimical to the true nature of drama. Like Gordon Craig in his essay, "The Actor and the Uber-Marionette," Sologub wished to subordinate the actor to the total spectacle; and like his fellow Russian symbolists, Ivanov, Briusov, and Bely, he hoped to return theatre to its ritual origins and transform spectacle into mystery.

Vera Kommissarzhevskaya organized a series of Saturday evenings in late 1906 at which poets would present their works for the stage to the company; Alexander Blok read his *The Puppet Show* prior to its production, and Sologub read his five-act tragedy, *The Gift of the Wise Bees*, a ritual drama based on the Greek myth of Laodamia and Protesilaus. Meyerhold was impressed with Sologub's play and wanted to present it in the round, with the audience on all sides of the playing area, but Vera's brother, Fyodor Kommissarzhevsky, opposed the idea on the grounds that the government, hostile to all innovation, would forbid the production. Despite Kommissarzhevakaya's support, Meyerhold was forced to abandon the plan, but in 1912 he returned to his idea of staging *The Gift of the Wise Bees.* As is revealed in the recently published Meyerhold correspondence *(V.E. Meyerhold Perepiska*, Moscow, 1976), the director discussed with Ida Rubinstein and Leon Bakst, both then in Paris, the possibility of presenting Sologub's play as part of the Russian Seasons in the French capital. Again the project was not realized, and *The Gift of the Wise Bees* remained unproduced.

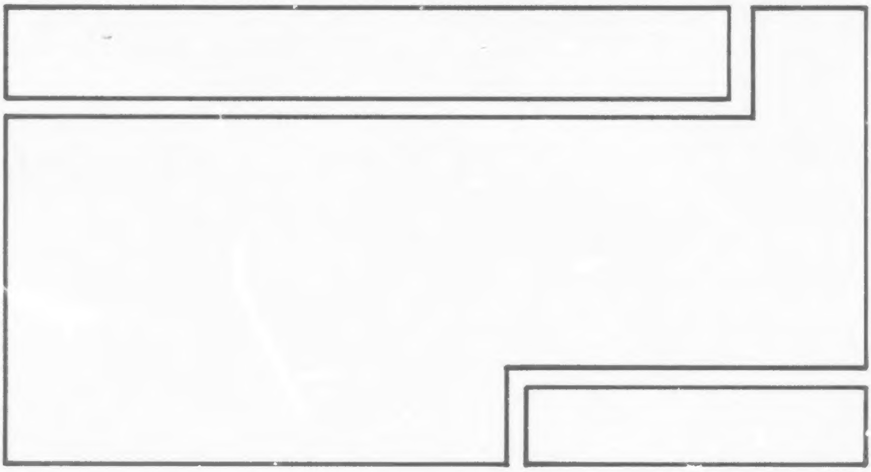


The Triumph of Death

The first of Sologub's plays to reach the stage was *The Triumph of Death*—a legendary drama on the theme of "Berthe aux grands pieds"—that opened on November 6, 1907, at the Kommissarzhevskaya Theatre under Meyerhold's direction and which was later played in Vitebsk by Meyerhold's own company. Sologub wrote a special prolog for the production in which modern characters in contemporary dress commented upon the drama; Meyerhold himself played the role of the poet. Sologub was crowned with a laurel wreath after the premiere. Meyerhold's highly stylized staging of *The Triumph of Death* brought to a head differences between the director and Kommissarzhevskaya and led to Meyerhold's dismissal a few days after the opening. When Meyerhold unsuccessfully contested Kommissarzhevskaya's action in a court of arbitration, Sologub acted as a witness on the director's behalf.

During this period Sologub was closely associated with the Kommissarzhevskaya troupe, participating in their activities and inviting members of the company to his house for his Sundays at home. Valentina Verigina, the actress who played Bertha in *The Triumph of Death,* recounts in her memoirs *(Vospominaniya,* Leningrad, 1974) how Sologub went with her and the other members of the company to see Isadora Duncan perform in St. Petersburg in 1907 and how they all met with the American dancer backstage afterward—an extremely important experience for the evolution of Sologub's theory and practice of the drama. Also at this same time the poet worked with Meyerhold on his production of Wedekind's *Spring Awakening,* editing the translation by Grigorii Feder that was used at the Kommissarzhevsky Theatre.

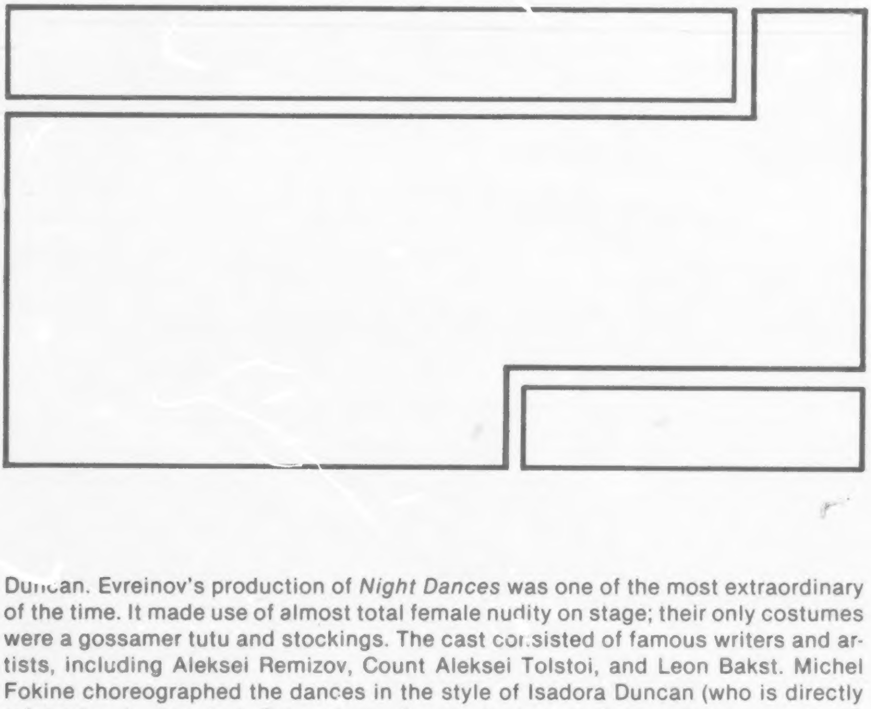
After Meyerhold's dismissal, Nikolai Evreinov shortly thereafter put on a new play by Sologub, at the Kommissarzhevskaya Theatre. Opening on January 8, 1909, *Vanka the Butler and the Page Jean* was an ironic comedy presenting in a series of parallel scenes contrasting pictures of Russian and French amorous intrigues between masters and servants in olden times. The play proved unusually popular up to and even after the revolution. Alexander Kugel, who with Evreinov had founded the satirical cabaret-theatre, the Crooked Mirror, suggested to Sologub that he revise *Vanka the Butler and the Page Jean* for his theatre, since the original version was under a three-year contract to Kommissarzhevsky. In order to give the play a topical dimension, Kugel proposed that a third amorous intrigue involving a contemporary Russian bureaucrat be added for the production at the Crooked Mirror; Sologub agreed and rewrote the play as *Amorous Intrigues Forever,* that opened, under Evreinov's direction, on November 25, 1912 and made the author the most talked of playwright in Russian. The staging was a complete innovation; the three stories were played side by side, one after the other, in alternating scenes.



> *Because the Crooked Mirror did not have a revolving stage, it was necessary to build a facsimile, in a handcrafted manner, which*

> *gave the possibility of presenting nonstop twenty-four scenes on three separate stages (each with its own curtain), lined up right in front of the footlights in such a way that there was visible to the audience: one stage with a raised curtain, and two others with lowered curtains.*
>
> *(Nikolai Evreinov, "Amorous Intrigues Forever," Russkaya Mysl'*, April 8, 1958, pp. 4-5).

The success of *Vanka the Butler* led to several other productions of Sologub's works in the period before World War I. During these years, Sologub was—along with Gorky, Kuprin, and Andreyev—one of the most celebrated Russian authors. In the summer of 1909, Evreinov, assisted by Fyodor Kommissarzhevsky opened a new experimental stage, The Gay Theatre for Grown-Up Children, where he directed his own harlequinade, *Gay Death,* and Sologub's dramatic fairytale, *Night Dances,* which was based on "The Secret Ball" from Alexander Afanas'ev's collection of *Russian Fairy Tales* (New York, 1973, pp. 224-226), and inspired by Isadora Duncan. Evreinov's production of *Night Dances* was one of the most extraordinary of the time. It made use of almost total female nudity on stage; their only costumes were a gossamer tutu and stockings. The cast consisted of famous writers and artists, including Aleksei Remizov, Count Aleksei Tolstoi, and Leon Bakst. Michel Fokine choreographed the dances in the style of Isadora Duncan (who is directly referred to in the play). Rehearsals often took place in Sologub's home, and the poet insisted that the actresses playing the King's twelve daughters appear barefoot, a revolutionary and shocking procedure for the time. The production was also given at the Liteiny Theatre in St. Petersburg the same year, and in 1915 *Night Dances* was revived at the Kommissarzhevakaya Memorial Theatre in Moscow, under the direction of Fyodor Kommissarzhevsky and Arkadii Zonov.



In 1910 Sologub made an adaption of his novel *The Petty Demon*, which was directed by Konstantin Mardzhanov at the Nezlobin Theatre in Moscow. In 1912 two new Sologub plays appeared in St. Petersburg: *The Conqueror Dream* at the Theatre of Comedy and Drama, and *The Hostages of Life* at the Alexandrinsky, directed by Meyerhold, who had not lost any of his interest in the works of the symbolist poet. In fact, in 1917 Meyerhold started shooting a film for the Timan and Reinhardt company based on Sologub's trilogy of novels, *Ghostly Witchcraft*, but the project came to nothing. During this period of revolutionary upheaval, Sologub himself worked on several adaptations. He dramatized Chateaubriand's novelette, *Les aventures du dernier Abencérage* as a verse drama, *Love and Fidelity*, that was published in 1917 and performed in Yalta at the Municipal Theatre in 1918, under the direction of Samuil Vermel from the Kamerny Theatre (according to *Meetings with Meyerhold*, Moscow, 1966, p. 173). With his wife, the writer Anastasia Chebotarevskaya, Sologub translated from the French *The Wolves*, a revolutionary drama about 1793, apparently by an author of the time, C.-Godard d'Aucourt de Saint-Just. The translation was rejected in 1918 by the Petrograd Theatrical Commission, which recommended plays to be staged.

The last of Sologub's works to be presented in the Russian theatre was *Arabesque of Roses*, the author's own adaption of his novel, *Lady Liza*, that the Second Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre produced in 1920 under the direction of well-known actor Vassily Luzhsky. Praised by Lunacharsky and by Nemirovich-Danchenko, *Lady Liza*, which had been in preparation since 1918, was also shown in the 1921-22 season in Tiflis and Petrograd, but in 1923 it was taken off as "too bourgeois," by order of a special commission on the theatrical repertory. From this point on, Sologub's plays—along with those of the other symbolists, including Maeterlinck—were condemned as decadent and alien to the spirit of the revolution.

In 1921 Sologub had written to Lenin requesting a passport and permission to leave Russia; in the same year his wife committed suicide. The poet spent his last years living quietly in Leningrad doing translations from a variety of different languages: French, German, English, Bulgarian, Greek, and Hungarian. He died in 1927 in obscurity. In recent times, *The Petty Demon* has been reprinted, and a handsome and carefully annotated edition of Sologub's poetry appeared in 1975 *(Biblioteka Poeta)*, but his plays and theory of the theatre remain stigmatized as reactionary, psychopathic, and perverted. Only the Soviet director Sergei Radlov writing two years after Sologub's death ("About One Will in the Theatre," in *Ten Years in the Theatre*, Leningrad, 1929) praised Sologub for making a strong and decisive statement about the rights of the individual creator in the theatre. Radlov ultimately rejected the notion that the author—a nonprofessional in the theatre—has sole possession of the spectacle, but he felt the charm of Sologub's "singing words."

Indeed, Sologub's chief theoretical work, "The Theatre of One Will," (published in 1908 in a collection of essays on theatre, including Meyerhold, Bely, Bryusov, and Benois) should be read as a symbolist text, a poetic fable—arcane and incantatory—containing the keys to the poet's mystical view of the universe. This world of deceptive appearances—our everyday life—is presided over by the evil Dragon, the sun, and by Aisa, the Greek fate of chance and contingency; opposed to it is the higher world, supremely calm and unchanging, of Ananke and of Death. The theatrical spectacle—likened to the workings of the universe and to the workings of human consciousness—must cease simply to reflect the reality of the lower world and become transformed into a mystery that will make transparent the eternal truth that lurks behind all masks. "I take a scrap of life and make a legend out of it" was Sologub's motto (as quoted by Pavel Markow in *O Teatre*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1976, p. 333). Seemingly autocratic and elitist, subjectively individualistic and solopsistic in his critical theory, Sologub actually creates a legend in "The Theatre of One Will" whereby the spectator becomes a celebrant; barriers between stage and auditorium are broken down, the audience surges upon the stage, removes its clothes, and dances—a goal to some extent realized in Evreinov's production of *Night Dances*. It should be noted that the word used by Sologub for dance (in Russian *plyaska)*—as opposed to ballroom dancing and ballet— connotes a totally free form of self-expression, frenzied, strenuous, and transcendent. It is such a dance that the theatre must become according to Sologub's "Theatre of One Will."

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The Theatre of One Will

by Fyodor Sologub

On the vessel there is a seal, on the seal there is a name; what is hidden within the vessel is known by the one who places the seal and by the initiated.
E. K. Vizener. *The Silence of the First Bride.*
A Novel.

You philosophize like a poet.
Dostoevsky. Letters.

Of all that ever has been created by the genius of man, the theatre is perhaps the lightest creation on its visible surface and the most frightful in its perceived depths. The fatal steps:—playing—spectacle—sacrament . . . . High tragedy to the same degree as light comedy and popular farce.

Tragic fear and the jester's laugh with an equally invincible force shake before our eyes the tattered, but still seductive, veils of our world, so familiar, it seemed, and suddenly, in the mutability of play, so unexpected, weird, terrifying or repulsive. Neither the tragic nor the comic mask deceives the attentive spectator—nor have they deceived the participant in the playing, while entrancing him, nor will they deceive the participant in the mystery play, while initiating him into the mystery.

Behind the mouldering guises, behind both the reddened face of the fairground buffoon and the pale mask of the tragic actor, there shines translucent the sole Image. Frightful, calling irresistibly . . . .

The fatal steps. We played when we were children—and then we died in our hearts for simple play, and we came out of curiosity to watch a spectacle—and the hour will come when we, in a transformation of body and soul, will reach true unity in the liturgical act, in the mysterious rite . . . .

When we were children we were alive—

Children are alive, only children,
We are dead, long since dead

We played. We divided up the roles among ourselves and played them—until they called us to bed. The theatre, in our hands, was partly realistic—we were very imitative and observant—partly symbolic, with an undoubted tendency toward decadence—we so loved the fairy tale and the words of strange, old incantations, and the whole amusing and useless—practically useless—rite of play. The conventionalization, naivete, and absurdity inherent in play were so alluring. We knew quite well that it was not something in fact, that it was all in fun. We were not demanding, either for stage designer or for property man. We harnessed a chair and agreed:

"This will be a horse."

But if we really felt like running a bit ourselves, we said:

"I'll be the horse."

We were not exclusive and narrow in the nature of our play. It was play for a large audience, in numbers of people, noise, and tumult, in corridors and halls, in garden and field—"a fight that is not a fight, play that is not play"—and there was intimate playing in cozy little nooks where adults and strangers did not drop in. There it was gay to the point of exhaustion, here weird, and gay as well, and our cheeks turned more crimson than from the violent running, and dim fires were kindled in our eyes.

We played—and we did not know that our playing was only the cast-off clothing from the life of adults. We were playing again as something new what had already been played before our time. And in this replaying of someone else's performance we grew infected with the strong poison of obsolete people.

However, it was not in the content itself of our playing that its meaning lay. The drops of burning poison became dissolved in the spring nectar of young life. The turbulence of new life grew drunk with a light and sweet intoxication, our feet became inspired with quick flight—the heavy burdens of heavy earthly time were burned away in the ecstasy of bright self-forgetfulness. And the sharp, quick moments were burned away, and from their ashes a new world was built—our world. A world blazing in youthful rapture . . . .

But even then did we actually want something else from playing, which had already become for us nothing more than a spectacle—did we actually want something else from both tragedy and comedy? We go so gladly to the theatre—especially to the premieres of famous plays—but what exactly do we want from the theatre? Do we want to learn the art of how to live, or to purge ourselves of dark emotions? To resolve moral, social, or esthetic, or any other kind of problem? To see "a walking stick shaken by the wind? Or a man dressed in soft clothes? Or a prophet?"

Of course, all of that and a good deal else besides can be dragged into the theatre, not without foundation and not without profit even—but in the true theatre all of that must be burned away, as old rags are burned in a bonfire. And no matter how varied the external content of a drama, we always want from it—if we have still remained ever so slightly alive since the serene days of our childhood—the same thing that we wanted form our childhood play—fiery ecstasy, ravishing the soul from the tight fetters of our boring and barren life. Enchantment and ecstasy—here is what draws each of us to the theatre, here are the means by which the genius of tragedy attracts us to participation in its mysterious design. But what precisely is this design?

Either I do not in the least know what purpose drama serves in the life of man, or it exists solely for the purpose of bringing man to Me. To transport man from the realm of capricious Aisa, from the world of strange and comical chance, from the sphere of comedy, into the realm of severe and consoling Ananke, to the world of necessity and freedom, to the sphere of high tragedy. To do away with the temptations of life, and to crown the eternal consoler, the true one, she who does not deceive.

A theatrical spectacle, which people come to watch for amusement and for entertainment, will not long remain for us simply a spectacle. And very quickly the spectator, tired by the change of spectacles alien to him, will wish to become a participant in the mystery, as he was once a participant in the playing. Expelled from Eden, he will soon knock with a bold hand on the door behind which the bridegroom feasts with the wise virgins. He was a participant in innocent play when he was still alive, when he still dwelt in paradise, in My beautiful garden between two great rivers. And now the sole way to resurrection for him lies in becoming a participant in the mystery, in joining hands with his brother and with his sister in the liturgical rite, and in pressing his lips, eternally parched from thirst, against the mysteriously filled cup where I "shall mix blood with water." To do in a brightly lighted temple open to all the people what can only be done now in the catacombs.

But the theatrical spectacle is a necessary transitional state, and in our time the theatre, unfortunately, still cannot be anything else except only a spectacle, and it often is an idle spectacle. Only a spectacle, unless it is intimate theatre, which it is necessary to create, but to talk about this—yes, how are we to talk about it? Indeed, this is the temptation for the uninitiated . . . . Perhaps only by allusions and images.

Contemporary theatre even wants to be spectacle above all. In the contemporary theatre everything is set up solely for the spectacle. For the spectacle, there are professional actors, the footlights and curtain, cunningly painted scenery seeking to give the illusion of reality, the clever contrivances of realistic theatre and the wise fabrications of conventionalized theatre.

However, once we have sketched out in our consciousness the path along which the development of the theatre must proceed in order for the theatre to answer to its high purpose, then the task of the man of the theatre—the dramatic author, director, and actor—consists of the following: while raising the theatrical spectacle to all those perfections that are only attainable for a spectacle, to bring it close to the synodical action, to the mystery, and to the liturgy.

It seems to me that the first obstacle that must be surmounted on this path is the performing actor. The performing actor draws the attention of the spectator too much upon himself and in so doing overshadows both the drama and the author. The more talented the actor, the more his tyranny is intolerable for the author and harmful for the tragedy. This seductive, but at the same time harmful, tyranny can be dethroned in two ways: either by transferring the center of the theatrical performance to the spectator, in the parterre, or by transferring it to the author, behind the scenes.

The first idea, which could result from acknowledging the theatre as a field of "synodical action," would apparently be the notion that it is necessary to abolish the footlights, perhaps remove the curtain, and make the spectator into a participant of even a creator of the performance. Instead of flat scenery, to keep four adorned walls or the external space of a street, a square, and open field. To turn the spectacle into a masquerade, which is a combination of play and spectacle. But then for what precisely would it be intended? Only so that "the people would gather together in a synod," as is sung in a contemporary song? A not unworthy pursuit, of course, but where will it lead?

It is true that in the masquerade the elements of the mystery are admixed in the direction of play and spectacle. There are allusions about the mystery, secrets about it. But it is still not the sacrament. Just as the weirdest fears arrive at noon when the evil Dragon, hiding behind violet shields, tells fortunes at the zenith, so the deepest mystery appears only when guises have been removed.

All meridians come together in one pole (or in two, if you wish, but according to the law of the identity of polar opposites, it is always enough to speak of only one pole); all earthly roads lead invariably to the one eternal Rome; "I am everything and only I am in everything, and there is nothing else, or ever was, or ever will be"; every kind of union among people has significance only to the degree that it brings man to Me—from the vainly seducing disunion to the true unity. The moving grandeur of the mystery is actually nourished by the fact that fortuitous multiplicity is mysteriously transformed into necessary unity. This moving grandeur reminds us that each separate existence on the earth is only a means for

Me—a means of exhausting in the infinity of experience here and now the countless multiplicity of My—and only My—possibilities, the sum total of which creates laws, but is itself moved by freedom.

And therefore the character who acts and wills in tragedy is only one, which both adds to the unities of action, place, and time as well and constitutes the unity of volitional striving in the drama.

(Perhaps the transitions in my thoughts here will appear to someone rather unexpected—but I am not presenting a reasoned argument, from an inability to do so, but I am only setting forth my own idea. "I philosophize like a poet.")

The character who acts and wills in tragedy must always be only one, and not in the sense that he leads the choral action, but in the sense that he is the spokesman for the inevitable, not the tragic hero, but the fate of the tragic hero.

The contemporary theatre presents a sad spectacle of a fragmented will and thus of a disunified action. "People are different," thinks the simple-minded playwright, "every fellow according to this own pattern." He goes various places, notices the setting, the way of life and the customs, observes various people, and depicts it all very faithfully. Kosmodemyanskii and Nalimov, along with Vaksel, recognize themselves and their neckties, and they are very glad if the author—out of friendship—has flattered them, or they are angry if the author let it be understood that their appearance and their behavior do not please him. The director is glad that he has enough material for an entertaining production of the play. The actor too is glad because he can put on makeup in a pleasing and interesting way, and he mimics the appearance and manners of painter X, poet Y, engineer A, lawyer B. . . . The audience is in ecstasy—it recognizes its own acquaintances and non-acquaintances and feels itself at an undoubted advantage: no matter what widespread faults have been displayed upon the stage, for all that each spectator, except for a small number of those portrayed, sees clearly that it is not he who is depicted, but someone else.

And none of this is at all needed. There is no everyday life, and there are no customs and manners—there is only the playing out of the eternal mystery. There are no stories and intrigues, and all the plots have long ago been plotted, and all the denouements long ago foretold—and only the eternal liturgy takes place. And what about all the words and dialog? One eternal dialog is being conducted, and the questioner himself responds and thirsts for the answer. And what are the themes? Only Love, only Death.

There are no different people—there is only one single man, only one single I in the entire universe, willing, acting, suffering, burning in the inextinguishable fire, and from the fury of a horrible and hideous life finding salvation in the cool and comforting embraces of the eternal consoler—Death.

I put on many guises according to My will, but always and in everything I remain myself—as a certain Shalyapin is the same in all his roles. Both beneath the frightful mask of the tragic hero, and beneath the ludicrous countenance of the fool who is the laughing stock of comedy, and in the motley overalls made of many-colored rags enveloping the fair-booth clown's body as it goes into contortions to amuse the gallery—beneath all these coverings the spectator must discover Me. The theatrical spectacle is presented before him as a problem with one unknown quantity.

If the spectator has come to the theatre as the simpleminded idler goes out into the world "in order to see the sun," then it is I, the poet, who create the drama in order to recreate the world according to My new conception. As in the great world, My single will alone rules, so in the small circle of the theatrical spectacle only a single will should rule—the will of the poet.

The drama is the work of a single conception, just as the universe is the work of a single creative thought. Fate in tragedy, chance in comedy is the only author. But is his will supreme in everything? As he wishes, so it all will be. He can, according to his arbitrary rule, unite lovers, or part them sorrowfully, raise the hero high or hurl him down into the dismal abyss of despair and ruin. He can crown beauty, youth, fidelity, courage, reckless daring, selflessness—but nothing will prevent him from glorifying deformity and depravity and from placing the traitor Judas higher than the apostles.

. . . In reproach to the iniquitous day
I shall raise foul abuse above the world
and by tempting I shall tempt.

But the actor is vain. He has overshadowed the author by his accidental interpretation, by the unexpectedness and disconnectedness of his realistic and psychological observations, and he has transformed the drama itself into a collection of roles for various characters. Then the director came and made off with the stage directions. Then the fate of the dramatic action, the hollow voice of commanding Moira, was, by the will of the manager of the theatre, crammed into the narrow prompter's box. And when there were too few rehearsals, then everyone on the stage looks at that one point from which a voice can be heard by the first rows of spectators who find it annoying. And the words of the poet are mercilessly garbled.

But can I really wish that my voice be heard coming out of a narrow dungeon? Or that, according to the whim of the director, the windows thought up by me on the stage be turned into columns which are of no use to me? Or that my word in the stage directions be embodied only in painted scenery?

No, my word must sound openly and loudly. The visitor to the theatrical spectacle must hear the poet before the actor.

Here is how I envisage the theatrical spectacle: the author or a reader taking his place—and preferably a reader, impassive and calm, and untroubled by the author's timidity in the face of the spectators who will scream at him their praise or disapproval (both equally unpleasant) and who, perhaps, have brought with them keys for joyous whistling—the reader sits near the stage, somewhere to the side. In front of him there is a table, on the table lies the play that is about to be put on. The reader begins in order, from the beginning:

He reads the title of the drama. The name of the author.

The epigraph, if there is one. Interesting and valuable ones are to be found. For example, the epigraph to *The Inspector General.* "Don't blame the mirror if your face is crooked. A Folk Saying." A rude epigraph—as was the author—but just and serviceable for establishing a bond between the spectator and the action on the stage.

Next the enumeration of the cast of characters.

The preface or remarks by the author, if there are any.

The first act. The setting. The naming of the characters who are found on stage.

The exits and entrances of the actors as they are indicated in the text of the drama.

All the stage directions, not omitting even the very smallest, even though it is only a single word.

And meanwhile, as the reader near the stage is reading, the curtain is drawn, on stage there is disclosed and illuminated the setting as indicated by the author's stage directions that have been read and say what is indicated in the text of the drama. If the actor forgets his lines—and when does he not forget them!—the reader reads them, just as calmly and just as much aloud as all the rest.

And the action is unfolded before the spectator, just as it is unfolded before us in life itself: we come and go and talk, according to, so it seems to us, our own will; we do what we need to do, or what we have a mind to do, and we endeavor to realize our, it would appear, wishes, in so far as the laws of nature and the wishes of other people do not impede us; we see, hear, smell, touch, taste, use all our senses and all our mental abilities in order to recognize what exists in the real world that has its own being and its own laws, partly intelligible for us, partly miraculous for us; we feel love for one person and hatred for another, and we are agitated by still other passions, and in accordance with them we establish our relations to the world and to people. And, ordinarily, we do not know that there is no such thing as our original will, that our every movement and our every word has been dictated and even foretold a long time ago once and for all in the demonic creative plan of universal play so that there exists for us neither choice nor freedom, there is not even a place for the actor's agreeable ad libbing, since it was already included in the text of the universal mystery by some unknown censor; and this world, with which we grow familiar, is nothing other than a stage setting, marvelous in appearance, but behind it there is backstage disorder and filth. We play, as best we can, the role dictated to us, actors and at the same time spectators, by turns applauding one another or hissing one another, sacrificed and at the same time sacrificing.

Can the theatre give us a different spectacle than the one that we are given by a world that is wide for our forces and narrow for our will? And should it? Play in the same way that you live, transfer life onto the stage—isn't that exactly the same thing that the realistic theatre wants?

But what then remains of the actor's performance? Indeed, the actor is turned into a speaking marionette—and this cannot be pleasing to the actor who likes effective roles, and the attention of the parterre directed on him, and the yelling of the simpleminded gallery, and journalistic clamor aroung his name. Such a theatre is unacceptable for the contemporary actor. He will say scornfully:

This will not be a theatrical performance, but simply a literary reading, accompanied by speech and movement. In that case it would be preferable to set up quite openly a theatre of marionettes, an amusement for children. Have crudely colored puppets move, and let someone behind the scenes speak in seven different voices—both speak and pull the string.

But why, after all, should the actor not be like a marionette? That is not offensive for a human being. Such is the immutable law of universal play—that man resemble a marvelously constructed marionette. And he should not try to get away from this, and he should not even forget it.

The predestined hour will come for each, and each of us, for all to see, will turn into a motionless and lifeless puppet, no longer able to fulfill any sort of role . . . .

There he lies in sackcloth, ready for the final ablution, a discarded puppet no longer of use to anyone—his hands folded the way they folded them—and his legs stretched out the way they stretched them out—and his eyes closed the way they closed them—a poor marionette for only one tragic performance! From back there, from behind the scenes, someone indifferent pulled you on an invisible string, someone cruel tortured you with the fiery torment of the passions, someone evil frightened you with the pale horrors of hateful life, to someone merciless you turned your grieving glances in your dying anguish. But here, in the parterre, someone has been amused by your awkward movements—controlled by the pulling on the frightful string—your confused words—so softly dictated by the hidden prompter—and your useless tears and your laughter equally pitiful as your tears. Enough—all the words of your role have somehow been spoken, all the stage directions have been quite exactly carried out—the string is wound up—and in vain your withered lips try to speak a new word—they have opened, closed automatically—and grown silent forever. They will hide you, bury you, forget you. . . .

The actor, even the most brilliant is not more than a man. His role, even the most striking, is less than life, and easier than life. And, of course, it is preferable for the actor to be a speaking marionette and move by obeying the distinct and impassive voice of the reader than despairingly to mix up one's role at the sound of the hoarse whisper of the prompter concealed in his box.

The single, even and impassive voice of "the man in black" guides the entire theatrical action—and, in accordance with this, everything on stage must strive for the unity necessary for the unsteady attention of the spectator not to be dissipated, not to be distracted by anything from what in the theatrical spectacle is sole and essential—from the disclosing, through the action of the drama, of My one and unchanging image under many and multiform guises.

The character carrying out the action never is alone on the stage. Even at those times when there are no other actors on the visible stage, the character who remains before the eyes of the spectators conducts a constant dialog with someone. The striving toward oneness, towards Me, can arise only from what is the polar opposite of Me—from the many, from the non-I. But all streams must flow together into one sea, and not grow lost in the quicksand of disconnected multiplicity. The sole Image, hidden beneath guises, must brighten before the spectators in the course of the theatrical action. From this also stems the requirement that in a dream there be only one hero, one character who above all carries out the action—only one point on which the attention of the spectator could be concentrated. All the rays of the scenic action must come together in a single focus so that the bright flame of ecstasy can blaze forth.

The other characters in the drama must be only the necessary steps leading up to the sole Image. Their significance in the drama depends entirely on the degree of their proximity to the unity of the volitional striving of the drama—disclosed in the hero—on which they are based. Only on their position on the descending steps of one and the same staircase of the dramatic action lies the foundation of their individual differences, of their separate traits, which otherwise would not at all be necessary in the drama. Desdemona is so significant in the tragic situation not because she has a great and touching role, not because she is the one whom Othello loved and destroyed, but because she was the fatal one whose hand tore off the guise that he had worn and who discovered for him the fatal mendacity and duplicity of the world.

From the fact that the actor must above all be one in tragedy, it follows that the theatre must free itself from the actor's acting. Acting, with all the diversity of faithfully observed and exactly rendered gestures and intonations, with all that has entered into the theatrical tradition and that is acquired through diligent training or that is devised anew by the invention and guesswork of a gifted actor—this acting with which we are familiar, whether it be inspired or rigorously calculated, amounts to the portrayal of clashes and struggles among completely separate people, each of whom suffices unto himself. But there are no such autonomous personalities on the earth, and thus there are no struggles among them either, but there is only the semblance of a struggle, the fatal dialectic within each character. Struggling against fate is inconceivable—there is only demonic playing, fate amusing itself with its marionettes.

The better the actor plays the role of Man, and the more grandiosely he cries out:

"Let us knock shields together, let us clink swords!" the more ludicrous his misplaced acting becomes, and the clearer his lack of understanding of his role. That "someone in gray" still has not accepted the challenge to a duel from anyone. The little girl does not fight with her dolls—she tears them apart and smashes them, and she laughs or cries, depending on her mood.

For us, an excessively zealous style of acting has already become ridiculous, and so has magnificent declamation, and the sublime gesture, and exaggerated conscientiousness in the rendering of realistic details—all these enticements even make us feel somewhat uncomfortable. Just as it is uncomfortable when, in the company of respectable people, someone suddenly starts talking loudly and excitedly and begins gesticulating. It is not worthwhile to play very zealously. Only the gallery bursts into gales of laughter or weeps because of what is presented on the stage—the parterre smiles faintly, sometimes sadly, sometimes almost gaily, but always ironically. For those in the parterre, it is not worthwhile acting.

Tragedy tears off from the face of the world its entrancing guise, and there, where harmony had seemed to exist for us, either pre-established or in the process of being created, the tragic muse discloses before us the eternal contradictoriness of the world, the eternal identity of good and evil and other polarities. Tragedy affirms every kind of contradiction; to every claim of life, be it true or false, tragedy responds with an equally ironic *Yes!* Neither to good nor to evil will it give a lyrical *No!* Tragedy is always irony, and it never takes the form of the lyric. And this is the way that tragedy must be put on.

And therefore there must be no acting on the stage. Only an even transmission of the text, word by word. A calm reproduction of the situations, picture after picture. The fewer of these pictures, and the more slowly they change, the more clearly the tragic conception will emerge before the entranced spectator. Let the tragic actor cease making efforts and putting on airs—exaggerated gestures and pompous declamation should be left to the fool and the fairground buffoon. The tragic performance must not remind us of the flashing pictures in cinema. And spared such flashing, which is annoying and useless, the attentive spectator must traverse the long path toward the comprehension of tragedy.

Chief spokesman of My will, the hero of the tragedy stands at the furthest remove from the spectator, and the path to an understanding of him is the longest of all; the spectator is required to climb up a steep flight of stairs toward him, and to overcome and triumph over much that lies within and without. But the further the distance from the hero, the closer to the spectator, and the more comprehensible for him, until finally the characters in the drama become so close to the spectator that they more or less completely coincide with him. They are similar to the chorus of ancient tragedy, giving voice to what any of those sitting on the steps of the amphitheatre might say.

Now the placid and self-satisfied bourgeois has come to the theatre. How can he be made to accept the plot and denouement, and what will he understand of it if all the speeches heard from the stage are alien to his understanding? Just as Shakespeare's tragedies could not have got along without the fool, so contemporary drama cannot get along without those trite mannikins whose faces are obliterated, whose mechanism is slightly out-of-order and creaks, and whose words are lustreless catch-phrases. And if the bourgeois in question shudders because of their unbearable triteness, so much the better. This will be a comforting sign that even he is coming closer to an understanding of the sole Image hiding under various guises, which has been outraged, but not crushed by the triteness of earthly speech. Here lies the true justification for light comedy, and for farce, and even for fairbooth buffoonery. And even for pornography.

This also has additional significance—since at least for the time being it is the sole means in the public theatre—and again I am not speaking of the intimate theatre, for us the dearest and the most desired, but about which it is so difficult to speak—the sole means of bringing the spectator into the action. The sole and, perhaps, in many cases sufficient means.

And even the mystery itself, while being in the highest degree synodical, nonetheless requires a single executant, he who sacrifices, and he who is sacrificed for the sacrament of self- sacrifice. Not only the higher type of public activity, the mystery, but in general all public accomplishment as well is at the same time completely individual. Every common cause is done according to the idea and plan of one person—every parliament listens to its speaker and does not make a racket synodically, gathering together in a synod in a gay synodical uproar. "On the vessel there is a seal, on the seal there is a name; what is hidden within the vessel is known by the one who places the seal and by the initiated." The temple is open to everyone, but the name of the builder is cut in stone. He who comes up to the altar must leave his malice beyond the threshold. And thus the crowd—the spectators—cannot be included in the tragedy in any other way than by the burning away within them of their trite and threadbare words. Only passively. He who carries out the action is always one.

What can possibly be the advantage for the stage to inundate it with a multiplicity of characters, each of whom lays claim to his own special nature and to his own separate role in the drama? Their flashing-by is annoying to anyone who understands the drama; it is difficult to remember who they are, and all to no purpose. For this reason it is even difficult to read dramas—one is constantly required to look back at the cast of characters. And that is why drama is out of favor in the book market.

But isn't it a matter of indifference to me who fusses and bustles about on the stage, Shuiskii or Vorotynskii—if I know that there will now pass before my eyes a tragedy of imposture, which has been so brilliantly conceived by the genius of Russian history (and still so poorly sketched by the geniuses of Russian literature)! First one character speaks, then another—aren't these your words, simpleminded spectator? Alongside the gold of poetry, aren't those your fifteen kopeck pieces—tarnished, long since worn thin, and dear to you all the same—which have been rolled out on the floor of the stage.

A naive calculation—but wise and true: greedily picking up his fifteen kopeck pieces, the theatregoer will also take My heavy gold, and for it sell Me his soul, flighty yet pleasing to me. But all the same it would be better if there were less of that small change on the floor of the stage: a wish directed at playwrights.

The one who wills in drama is the author; the one who carries out the action is the actor; and likewise the spectator should be one. In this connection the mad king was right, who, all alone in his magnificent theatre, listened to the performance given by his actors, hiding behind the heavy damask in the quiet darkness of the royal box. In the tragic theatre each spectator should feel that he is this mad king concealing himself from all. And no one must see his face, and no one will be surprised at the fact that

he veiled in mystery
the play of his passions,
gay at times by the grave
and gloomy at a feast.

And if he starts to doze or even falls completely asleep—art itself is a golden dream—and why should not drama be a rhythmic dreaming?—no one will laugh at him, and no one will grow uneasy or be shocked by his sudden snoring in the most pathetic place.

And he himself must neither see nor hear any one—neither those who artlessly reflect on their faces all the emotions, moods, sorrows and sympathies, nor those who pretend to be understanding and intelligent. Neither see the handkerchief at the reddened eyes, nor the nervously crumpled glove in uneasy hands. Neither hear those blowing their noses and sobbing, nor those who laugh both when they should laugh and when they should cry. The spectator at a tragic spectacle must remain in silence, in darkness and in isolation. Like the prompter in his box. Like a theatre mouse.

Not diverted by anything from outside, the spectator must not be diverted either by anything on the stage which does not enter into the composition of what is rigorously necessary for the drama. Whether there is superbly painted scenery on the stage, or only pieces of cloth are hung on it and cover it, the stage in any case must be laid out in one plane. The spectacle should resemble a painting so that the spectator does not have to look beyond the actor into the depths of a multidimensional stage, into that sphere where something externally concealed may be shown, at the same time that it would be requisite to seek out what is being disclosed in the one who acts, wills, and contemplates.

Scenery is pleasing on the stage—it immediately creates the proper mood, it gives the spectator all the external hints—and why shouldn't there be scenery? Since even in the wide outer world the same holds true:

And suddenly then everything
seemed flat scenery to me—
the dawn stretched out like a paper band,
the star as tinsel glittered.

But he who is bewildered in the world of external scenery comes to the theatre in order to find himself—in order to come to Me. And it is not proper to distract his attention needlessly by a rich diversity of settings. Thus, by the way, it is preferable for the entire drama to take place in one setting. In any case, at each given moment the spectator must know what he should be watching, what on stage it is requisite to see and hear. The author's stage directions, loudly enunciated by the reader, offer him assistance in this connection; likewise, of course, he will be helped by the entire art of mechanical devices. Everything that confronts the spectator on the stage should be significant, every detail of the set should be rigorously considered so that there is nothing superfluous before the spectator's eyes, nothing beyond the absolutely necessary.

In this direction, perhaps distribution of the lighting is appropriate and advisable: perhaps the spectator should be shown only what he is required to see at any given moment, and everything else should be submerged in darkness—just as in our consciousness everything pending, to which we do not at present turn our attention, falls below the threshold of consciousness. It is, and at the same time it is as though it were not. Because for me there exists only that which is in Me and for Me—all the rest, despite its possible reality for someone else, reposes only in the world of possibilities, only awaits its turn to be.

Such is the form of the theatrical spectacle in brief outline. And the content enclosed within this form is the tragic play of Fate with its marionettes—the spectacle of the fatal melting of all earthly guises—the mystery of perfect self- affirmation. In my playing, I play with puppets and guises—and, for all the world to see, the guises and veils fall—and mysteriously there is disclosed My sole image, and exulting, My sole will celebrates. My fatal error ties all knots, and I struggle in the constricting paths of insolvable earthly contradictions—and the fatal knots are cut by a sharp stiletto which transfixes My heart. Through joyous play I have raised up worlds—and I am the sacrifice, and I am the priest who sacrifices. Burning love consoles, and as it consumes, it is consumed—and the final consoler is Death.

Of course, the theatre gravitates towards tragedy. And it must become tragic.

In our time every farce becomes a tragedy, for the sensitive ear our laughter sounds more frightful than our weeping, and hysterics precede our ecstasy. In olden times the joyous and healthy laughed. The conquerors laughed. The conquered wept. In our land the sad and the mad laugh. Gogol laughs . . . My madness has gay eyes.

Our comedy, quite simply speaking, is nothing other than a ludricrous and amusing tragedy. But even tragedy is ludicrous for us.

The sorrows of young Werther? No—the sorrows of a conscientious secondary school student. This is very funny, but it also very serious. He could have been whipped with birches—but he shot himself. The young girls crowd around the grave that has been dug for him, they strew roses on his coffin—his parents weep and blow their noses. They wanted to whip him, but they were too late. It was not their fault.

Unsteady laughter swirls around us, like music. It is rhythmic, perhaps. It craves free and spirited dances. We, too, know how to dance. We are a frightfully gay people—we dance like a family of coffin-makers in the year of the plague....

Whatever the content of future tragedy may be, it will not be able to get along without the dance. Even now shrewd playwrights to quite good purpose insert into their plays the cakewalk, the *matchish,* and other such nonsense.

But the dance, I hope, will be choral. And here is why it is necessary to remove the footlights in theatres.

If the contemporary spectator can participate in the theatrical spectacle only by recognizing himself in the more or less crooked mirrors that are held up to him from the stage, then the next step in his participation in the tragic action must be his participation in the tragic dance.

How splendid that Isadora Duncan danced, lending wings to bare feet through the dance...

It is so sweet to know that besides our life there is another
different life! (Valerii Bryusov)

But soon all the rest of us, too, will become infected with this "different life," and like whirling *khlysty*, whirl onto the stage and start spinning with frantic zeal.

The action of the tragedy will be accompanied by and alternated with the dance. Joyous dancing? Perhaps. In any case, more or less frantic. Because dance is nothing other than the rhythmic frenzy of body and soul, plunging into the tragic element of music.

If you look at the dancer and think that he is spinning and perspiring profusely and therefore likes to drench himself with the sweet fragrance of perfumes, then you are mistaken, of course. It is not the dancer who spins before you—the world turns around him ever faster and faster, dispersing, decomposing, melting in movement that is fast, free, and light. And you do not see this universal spinning because you are timid and reasonable and do not dare abandon yourself to the frantic rhythm of the dance, which breaks the fetters of the everyday. You see only the ridiculous—the overly red faces, the awkwardly drawn back or inelegantly bent hand, the dampened strands of hair and those repulsive little drops on young skin. You do not know that this is the spinning of the earth as it blows with sweet fire upon the frenzied body that abandons itself to the universal dance, and Eden's dewdrops combine within themselves comforting coolness and comforting heat.

The black curl beats against the white neck, the tip of the white shoe gleams from under the white dress, the joyous smile on the vermilion lips flashes and speeds away, the train sweeps along and rustles against. Put on your gloves, invite the lady of your choice, have no fear—for this is only a ballroom dance, and you are not on the Brocken, but in the ballroom in the home of the baroness Jourfix. The floor has been polished with wax—"the gift of the wise bees"—but it is by no means dangerous. "Fräulein Snandulia dances only with suitable young men" (Wedekind: *Spring's Awakening*)—she is a well-brought up Fräulein, even though "her dress was cut low in front and in back—in the back down to her waist, and in the front to the point of madness. She couldn't have been wearing any slip at all."

This ballroom dance is only a hint at what the tragic dance should be. Although it is true that the corset, gloves, and shoes of the dancing lady correspond partly, even though to a weak degree, to the mask of the ancient tragic histrion. But to be sure, we now recognize that the mask made by the theatre's property man is of no use to us, no matter how fine it is. We always wear our own personal guises, and they fulfill their purpose so well that we often deceive not only others but ourselves also through the play of their expressions.

The whole world is only the scenery behind which is hidden the creative soul—My soul. Every earthly face and every earthly body is only a guise, only a marionette destined for one playing each, for an earthly tragicomedy—a marionette set in motion for word, gesture, laughter, and tears. But tragedy arrives upon the scene, attenuates the settings and appearances, and through the scenery there appears translucent a world transfigured by Me, the world of My soul, the realization of My sole will—and through the guises and appearances there shines My sole image and My sole transfigured flesh. Flesh beautiful and liberated.

The rhythm of liberation is the rhythm of the dance. The grandeur of liberation is the joy of the beautiful, bare body.

The dancing spectator, both male and female, will come to the theatre, and at the threshold they will leave behind their crude, their petty-bourgeois clothes. And they race along in the light dance.

So the crowd, which has come to look on, will be transformed in the round dance, which has come to participate in the tragic action.

Translated from Russian by Daniel Gerould

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Hamlet at the Vakhtangov

by Alma H. Law

The premiere of *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow on May 19, 1932, marked Nikolai Akimov's debut as a director. A talented Leningrad artist, the young Akimov had already attracted considerable attention in theatrical circles with his unconventional setting for *Tartuffe* in 1929, featuring the unscrewed joints of an enormous exhaust pipe, and his striking design in 1931 for Schiller's *Intrigue and Love*, which made use of a huge, shiny silver disk set on stage at a sharp angle to suggest the top of large sphere.

With his production of *Hamlet*, Akimov was determined to sweep away once and for all the pall of gloomy symbolism cast by earlier interpretations. His most immediate targets were the 1911 Gordon Craig production and the one at the Second Moscow Art Theatre in 1924, with Mikhail Chekhov both directing and playing the title role. "A sickly degenerate," is the way Akimov dismissed Chekhov's Hamlet.

Instead of probing philosophical questions, Akimov wanted his *Hamlet* to show an actual struggle between real people acting in a concrete historical situation. Whereas Craig had sought to reveal in his staging the victory of spirit over flesh, Akimov intended to do just the opposite by bringing Hamlet down to earth and making him the hero of a lusty and witty adventure story. Akimov aimed his production at the average Soviet theatregoer who he maintained would only be confused by philosophizing and murky symbolism and quickly bored by long monologs. "We hope," Akimov said, "that Shakespeare's realism, inadmissible in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, will be valued by our audience in all its stupendous power."

Above all, Akimov maintained, *Hamlet* should be entertaining. And to insure that it would be exactly that he loaded his production with vaudeville acts and farcical tricks, sword fights and duels, brilliant feasts and breathtaking pageantry. In addition he added an abundance of colorful music, especially written for the production by Dmitri Shostakovich. With its rich and magnificent settings, Akimov's *Hamlet* marked a high point in the reaction against the austere constructivist settings that had dominated the Russian stage in the lean years following the Revolution. By 1932, the country was well into its first Five Year Plan and the grip of harsh economic controls was already being felt throughout the land. Nevertheless, no expense seems to have been spared in making this production a visual feast lasting more than four and one-half hours.

Every inch the artist, and a rebel one at that, Akimov did not so much "stage" a production as "produce" his pictures in the theatre. As Pavel Markov noted, "He looks at the stage and at life with the eye of an artist who stops the flow of life for a moment and then transfers this 'stopped life' to the stage." Akimov was a sworn enemy of illusionism and mystery in the theatre. He once defined his basic rules as follows: 1) Do not try to fool the audience into thinking your stage is 200 meters deep if it is only 20 meters. 2) Present your materials for what they are. Let plywood stand for plywood and iron for iron. 3) Unmask your technique. Akimov also had a total fascination for objects and could make them "come alive" on the stage in a way that made them an integral part of the action.

For his production of *Hamlet*, Akimov moved the time forward to the sixteenth century, making it almost contemporary with Shakespeare's own day. He did this less to achieve historical authenticity than to add the atmosphere and color of the Renaissance to the production. He filled the stage with an array of soldiers and townfolk, beggars and cripples, even live horses and dogs. The final result was an extraordinarily varied and colorful spectacle alternating action scenes with genre pictures very reminiscent of canvases by Pieter Bruegel. The very theatrical opening Akimov planned for Act II was typical. (It was evidently dropped from the production before the premiere.) A religious procession enters led by a group of monks with a motley array of "horrifying and monstrous" beggars and cripples following after them. Playing various primitive instruments, whistling, leaping and dancing, they move across the stage. Suddenly the last ragged cripple separates himself from the procession and heads for Polonius' house. It turns out to be none other than Reynaldo, one of Polonius' secret agents. When Polonius finishes speaking to Reynaldo, the latter again resumes his pose as a cripple and begins to creep away. But Polonius, wanting to add a few words, calls him back. This comic number with Reynaldo slipping in and out of his disguise is repeated no less than six times. Suddenly a squealing pig is heard. In panic, Reynaldo hops about the stage finally falling under Ophelia's feet. She too has come to report to Polonius. Next Hamlet runs into the courtyard pulling a piglet along on a string and wildly "playing the madman." The sight of Hamlet also throws Polonius into a panic. He and Ophelia quickly run into the castle to tell the King what they have seen.

Akimov's basic thesis was that Hamlet is a fighter and a political intriguer rather than a philosopher. In this sense he more closely resembles his forerunner, Saxo's clever Amlethus, who pretends madness to protect himself until the time is ripe to avenge the murder of his father. Hamlet wastes no time in self-torment or indecision. He eats and drinks with gusto and in general has a roaring good time. Going completely against tradition, Akimov selected a comic actor, Anatoly Goriunov, to play the role of Hamlet. Short and stocky with broad shoulders and a slight paunch, he bore little physical resemblance to earlier Russian Hamlets. In fact, he seemed more suited to play Falstaff than the Prince of Denmark.

Other characters also underwent considerable transformation. Ophelia, typically a frail creature, was played by Valentina Vagrina as a lively, buxom young maiden. If Hamlet was ever in love with her, he clearly is no longer by the time the play begins. Suspecting that Ophelia has been enlisted by her father to spy on him, Hamlet only feigns love in order to trap her. When she is orphaned by the murder of her father and left without her brother to guide her, Ophelia quickly falls into bad company at court.

To sharpen the conflict between Hamlet and his mother, Akimov turned the Queen (A. Orochko) into a powerful matriarch. She is a grasping, greedy miser. Thirsty for power, she sees in Hamlet not a son but a dangerous subject who must be eliminated. The King (Ruben Simonov) is portrayed as a rather repulsive jester. Much younger than his dead brother, he is completely under the power of the queen.

Akimov considerably strengthened the role of Horatio (Kozlovsky) by making him an intellectual foil for Hamlet. Garbed in black robe and wearing eyeglasses, he looks like a cross between a portrait by Holbein and a professor out of the nineteenth century. He goes about with his nose buried in a book spouting excerpts from Erasmus and other Renaissance scholars.

Laertes is a typical hero of adventure drama, a foppish Frenchified dandy who is forever posturing and posing. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are also turned into comic caricatures. With their patently false noses, they resemble a pair of sniffing rats as they creep about spying on Hamlet. Only the ancient and bearded Polonius remains relatively unscathed by being treated in a more traditional, although highly exaggerated, manner as a stupid and pompous busybody.

Akimov claimed that he used more of Shakespeare's text than in any previous production of Hamlet in Russia. But, in fact, he performed radical surgery on the play. Hamlet's role was severely cut to remove anything that smacked of gloomy self-doubt. Completely eliminated were his monolog beginning, "Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I! . . ." (II,2) and, "How all occasions do inform against me and spur my dull revenge!. . ." (IV,4). In addition, Akimov omitted the monologs from Hamlet's meeting with the Queen (III,4), as well as the one, "Now I might do it pat,. . ." from the scene in which the Prince watches Claudius kneeling in prayer (III,3).

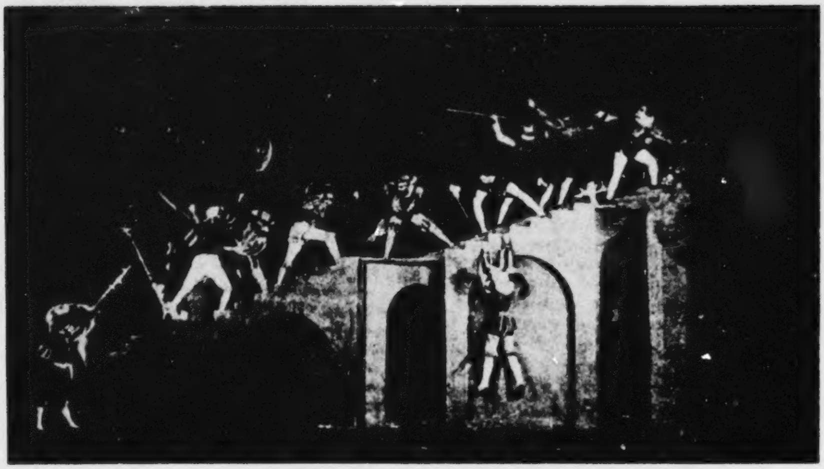
Other scenes were also thrown out, including almost the entire graveyard episode. The dialog between Hamlet and the Gravedigger ("Alas, poor Yorick,") Akimov moved to the second act and set in Hamlet's library. What remained of the exchange between the two Gravediggers, Akimov jazzed up by adding lines especially written by the satirists, Vladimir Mass and Nikolai Erdman, parodying Hamlet's philosophizing about the meaning of life. "To drink or not to drink," one gravedigger asks the other, "There is the question." "What a question," the second gravedigger, representing the voice of reason, answers, "Obviously, you drink."

Since Akimov regarded much of the philosophizing in Hamlet as simply an expression in verse of the thoughts of Erasmus, he decided to introduce the Renaissance scholar's writings directly into the text. Most of them were taken from the *Colloquies*. In addition, citations by a number of other scholars were also added.

Highlights of the Production

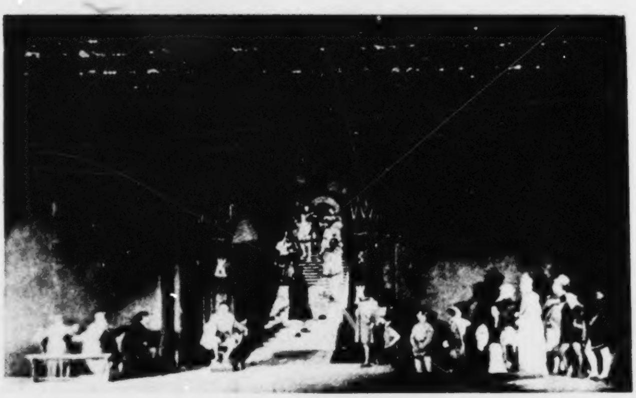
Prolog: Horatio appears before the golden stage curtain. He announces the beginning of the performance with his words from the final act:

. . . . So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
And, in the upshot, purposes mistook
Fallen on the inventors' heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

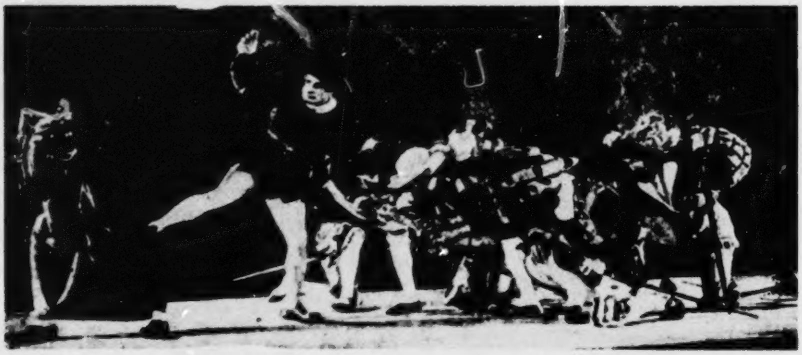


Act I, scene 1: A platform before the Castle at Elsinore. Two sentinels are huddled near a campfire. Horatio approaches from below and behind, out of the depths of darkness shrouding the castle. As Bernardo tells of seeing an apparition the night before, a ghost suddenly appears on the castle ramparts.

This "ghostly masquerade" is staged by Hamlet with Horatio's connivance in order to dupe the palace guards and convince the officers to join his conspiracy against Claudius. Akimov borrowed the idea for this scene, including the use of a clay pot as a resonator, from Erasmus' Colloquy, IV, "Exorcism." It is Hamlet himself who plays the ghost dressed in the old King's suit of armor which has been hidden away in a secret cupboard. As he appears out of the mists, "like a white raven with plumes," Horatio, hidden below, roars into the clay pot to create the ghostly voice of Hamlet's father.



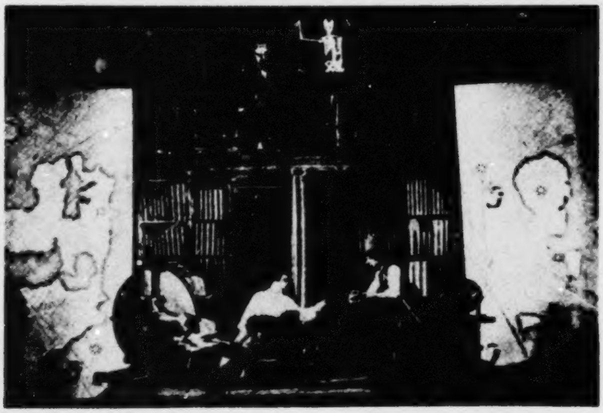
Act I, scene 3: A Royal Chamber in the Castle. The atmosphere is one of good humor and cosy domesticity. All is quiet. Gertude is knitting. The king is dictating, "Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death. . . ." Hamlet enters. On his head he wears a tall, stovepipe hat. His face is shrouded by a long black veil to indicate his grief over the death of his father. To the accompaniment of an orchestra playing a magnificent march, Hamlet slowly mounts the long staircase and presents himself to the King.



Act I, scene 6: The platform before the Castle, Hamlet and a group of officers appear to await the ghost. Horatio, enveloped in a long black robe, turns and roars into the clay pot to simulate the voice of the dead King. "Swear," the ghostly voice slowly intones. Hamlet prances about, adroitly jerking and kicking with his leg as if attempting to drive away the apparition. "Swear by his sword," the ghost repeats as the officers kneel and kiss Hamlet's sword.

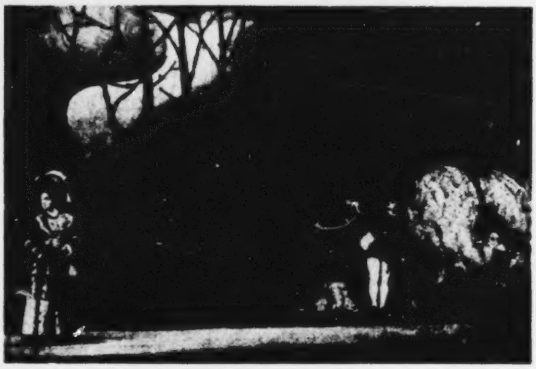
Act II, scene 1: Hamlet's library. This scene is intended to further demystify Hamlet, by showing him and his scholarly sidekick, Horatio, seriously at work studying anatomy. It also serves as a prolog to the Gravedigger's appearance in Act II, scene 3.

Act II, scene 2: The King receives Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in an artist's studio where he is having his portrait painted in full regalia. To spare the King the discomfort of posing, his cloak and ermine robes hang on a stand behind him. Pages hold his crown, globe, and sceptre.

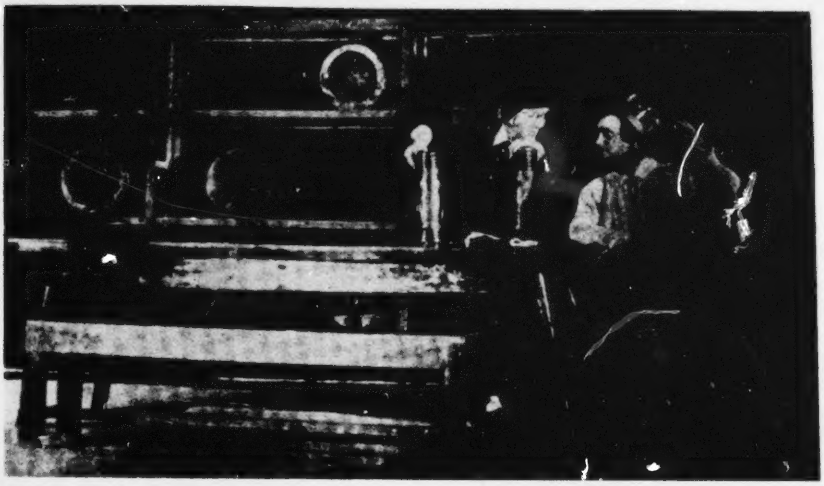


Act II, scene 3: Hamlet and Horatio are again at work in the library. The Gravedigger enters and presents Hamlet with "Poor Yorick's" skull.

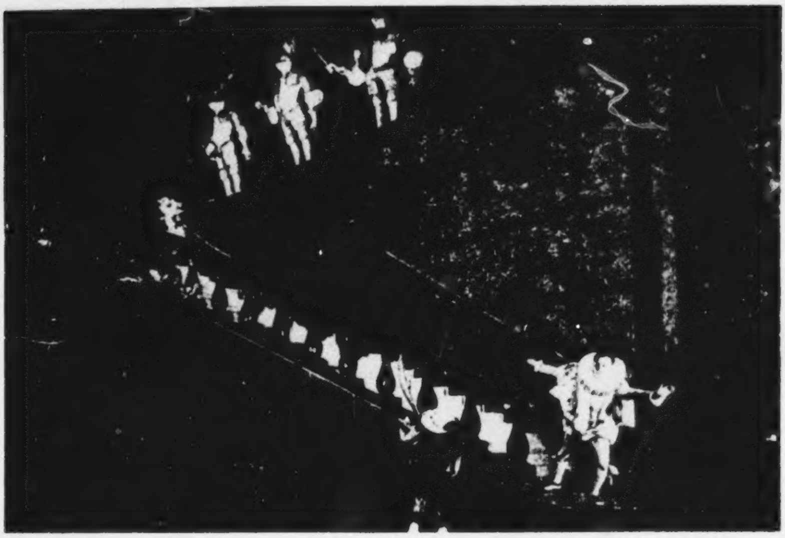
Act 11, scene 4: The palace courtyard. This scene in which Hamlet feigns madness is very typical of the genre pictures Akimov created for the production. The courtyard is bustling with activity. Several servants are beating carpets. Others are coming from the marketplace laden down with baskets of provisions. Stable boys are walking the horses. Soldiers stand on guard. Suddenly Hamlet appears wearing a nightshirt hanging down to his knees and cooking pot on his head. He clutches a carrot in one hand. A gang of boys is chasing after him. Upon seeing Hamlet, Polonius asks, "Do you know me, my Lord?" "Excellent well," Hamlet answers, "You are a fishmonger."



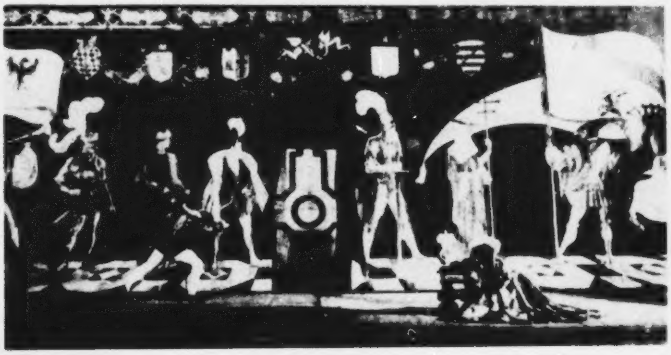
Act II, scene 5: Hamlet's first encounter with Ophelia, in which he tells her, "Get thee to a nunnery. . . ." takes place in the forest during a Royal hunt. Huntsmen appear and rush across the stage in pursuit of a stag (made of *papier-maché*). Dismounting from their horses, Hamlet and Ophelia stop near a hollow tree. When Hamlet realizes that the King and Polonius are hiding in the tree trunk, he pretends to be mad and begins crazily dancing about.



Act III, scene 1: A subterranean taproom. *The Murder of Gonzaga* is played here in full as a rehearsal with Hamlet looking on. (This presented quite a challenge to the translator, Lozinsky, who was required to turn the pantomime into verse and write an ending to the scene.) Following the rehearsal, the now slightly drunk Hamlet sits alone with Horatio. Grabbing the crown left behind by the players, Hamlet puts it on his head. He touches it with his hand and says to Horatio, "To be or not to be—that is the question." Akimov gave Hamlet's soliloquy a very concrete reality by rewriting it as a dialog with Horatio about whether or not Hamlet would become King. All of the words of doubt were, of course, expressed by Horatio.

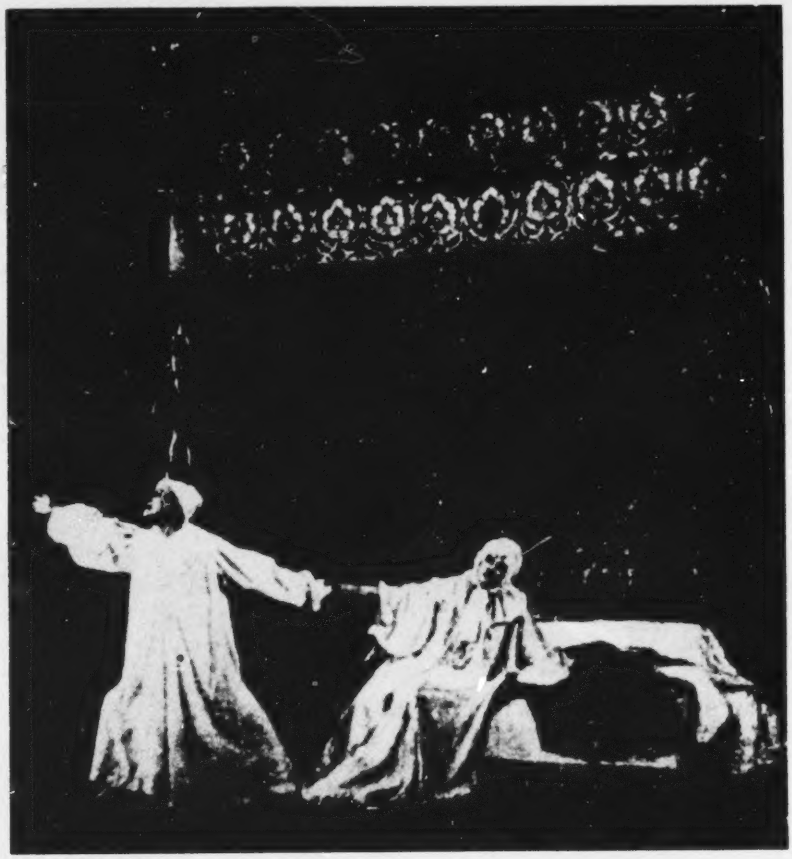


Act III, scene 2: The King and Queen accompanied by their courtiers triumphantly mount the palace staircase to watch the players enact *Gonzago*, which is here performed offstage. Hamlet tells the King, "You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife." Frightened by Hamlet's words, the King runs down the staircase crying, "Give me some light! His long crimson cloak flows behind him like a trail of blood. Critics were agreed that Akimov's use of the red cloak in this scene created one of the most stunning moments in the production.



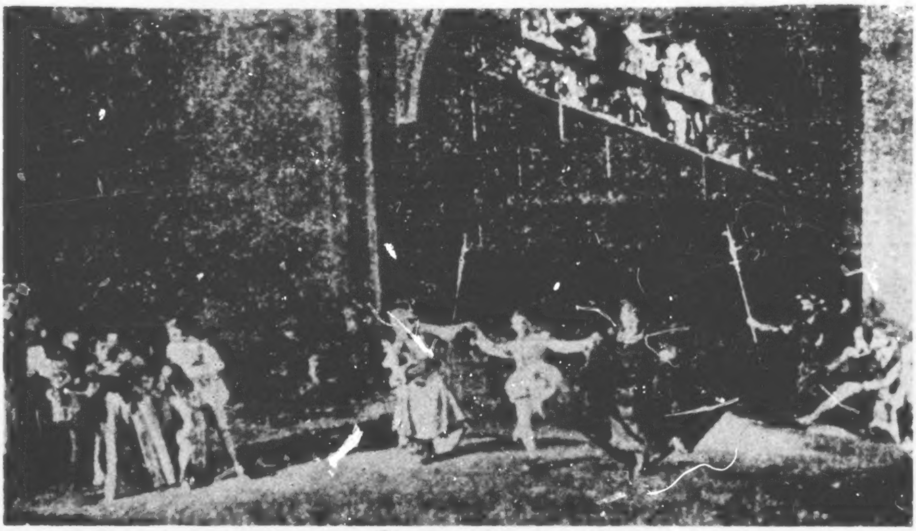
Act III, scene 3: "The flute scene." According to Yuri Elagin, "Shostakovich used [this scene] to ridicule maliciously the proletarian composers. Hamlet pressed a flute to the lower end of his spine, while in the orchestra a piccolo accompanied by a bass and a drum played shrill, false notes of the famous Soviet song, 'They Tried to Vanquish Us.' This was a song written by Davidenko, a leading proletarian composer, on the occasion of a victory won by Soviet troops over the Chinese 1929" (***The Taming of the Arts***).

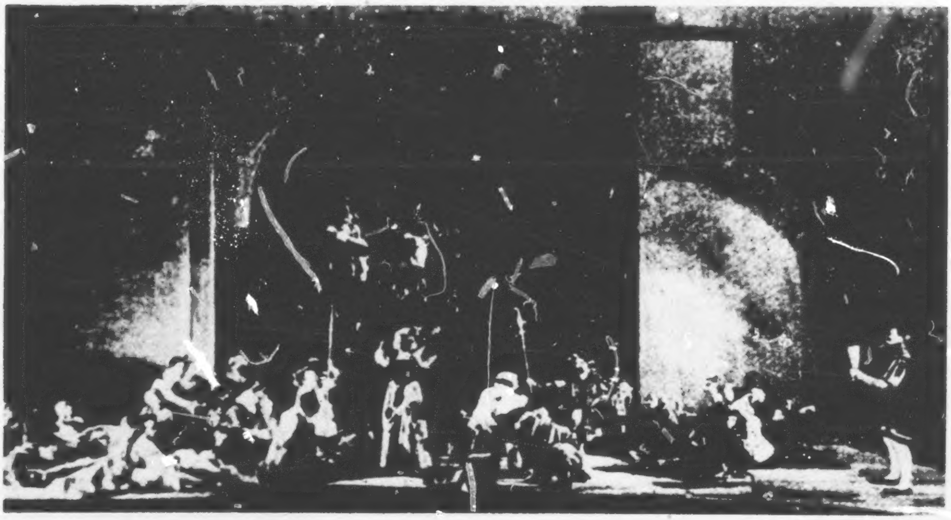
Act III, scene 4: The Queen's chamber. The stage is dominated by an enormous Renaissance tapestry stretching across its entire width. Its larger-than-life figures dwarf Hamlet as he moves along it with sword drawn: "How now? A rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!" He thrusts his sword through the opening in the tapestry.



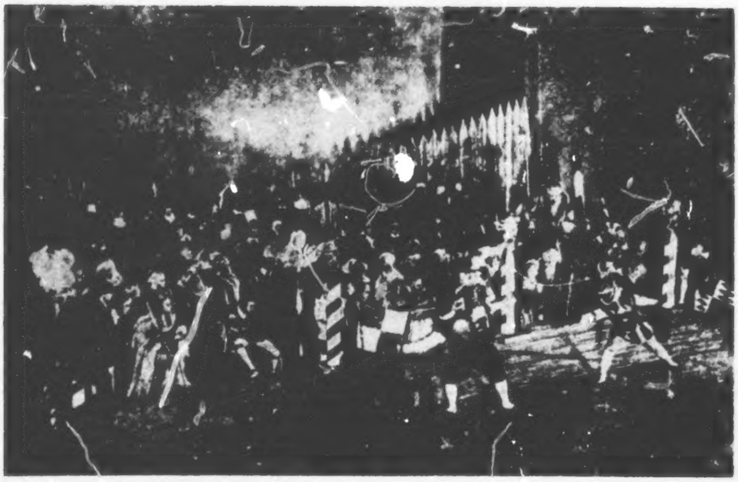
Act III, scene 5: The Royal bedchamber. The Queen tells Claudius that Hamlet has killed Polonius.

Act III, scene 7: The King, being carried by his servants, confronts Hamlet and demands of him, "Where's Polonius?" Hamlet tells him, "At supper [. . .] A certain convocation of politic worms are eating at him. . . ."



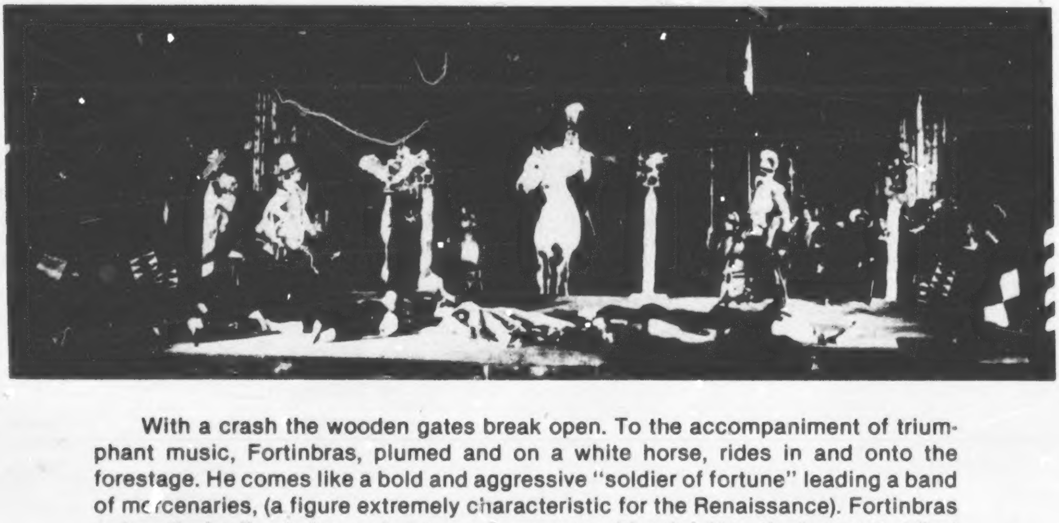


Act IV, scene 1: A Royal banquet. Akimov filled this scene at court with music, dancing, and pantomimes. During the festive revelry, Ophelia gets drunk. She staggers about among the guests singing and finally wanders off to drown in the river.



Act IV, scene 7: The final duel scene is staged as a public tournament before not only the King and Queen but also a large crowd of spectators (some real, some *papier-maché*), gathered behind a roped off area. Following Hamlet's death, Horatio bends over the Prince's body and quoting Erasmus, says:

> *He discoursed about clouds, about ideas,*
> *He measured the tiny joints of fleas,*
> *He delighted in the songs of mosquitoes,*
> *But that which was important for everyday life,*
> *That he did not know. . .*



With a crash the wooden gates break open. To the accompaniment of triumphant music, Fortinbras, plumed and on a white horse, rides in and onto the forestage. He comes like a bold and aggressive "soldier of fortune" leading a band of mercenaries, (a figure extremely characteristic for the Renaissance). Fortinbras orders the bodies to be carried away. Overcome with grief, Horatio does not at first notice that Hamlet's body has also been removed. Upon seeing that all that remains is the face mask Hamlet had worn while fighting Laertes, Horatio raises it up. Carefully holding it in his hands, he approaches the footlights. After a long pause he says in a quiet, sad voice, ". . . What a joy it is to live."

Although the general public hailed this new version of *Hamlet*, clearly neither the critics nor the Soviet Culture czars were ready for it. The critics were driven to distraction by the many contradictions between the text and the stage action Akimov had devised. They complained that Akimov had included everything in his production "except Shakespeare." Following an attack in *Pravda* by Karl Radel, a leading Soviet journalist and the mouthpiece for the Party's Central Committee, Akimov was forced to withdraw the production from the Vakhtangov's repertory. For a brief time after that, it survived in Leningrad under an agreement the theatre had with that city's municipal organization. And then the production, which Mordecai Gorelik called "so arresting, so fertile in thought and theatre from start to finish," disappeared forever.

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NEW BOOKS

Essays on Performance Theory (1970-1976) by Richard Schechner. Drama Book Specialists (Publishers): New York, 1977. 224 pp. $12.50 (cloth); $8.95 (paperback).

A collection of articles by one of the leading contemporary writers on theatre. Some have appeared in *The Drama Review* ("Drama, Script, Theatre, Performance"), the *Educational Theatre Journal* ("From Ritual to Theatre and Back: The Structure/Process of the Efficacy-Entertainment Dyad") and *Theatre Quarterly* ("Actuals: a Look into Performance Theory"). There has been some rewriting. "Ethology and Theatre" is a new long essay that, like the others, illustrates Schechner's broad view of performance and his use of the sciences to help explain it.

Artaud at Rodez by Charles Marowitz. Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd.: London, 1977. (Distributed by Drama Book Specialist [Publishers], New York.) 112 pp. $8.95 (cloth); $4.95 (paperback).

Primarily this is a playscript by Charles Marowitz. However, there are 46 pages of appendices about Artaud: interviews with Gaston Ferdière (Artaud's doctor at Rodez), Roger Blin, and Arthur Adamov; articles by Ferdière and by Marie-Ange Malausséna (Artaud's sister).

The Theatre of Images edited by Bonnie Marranca. Drama Book Specialists (Publishers): New York, 1977. 156 pp. 7 photographs; 32 plates of color drawings. $15.00 (cloth); $10.00 (paperback).

Contains the scripts of two productions: Richard Foreman's *Pandering to the Masses: a Misrepresentation* (which was not included in the Foreman anthology published by N.Y.U. Press) and Robert Wilson's *A Letter for Queen Victoria. Pandering* was produced by the Ontological-Hysteric Theatre in 1975. *Queen Victoria* was done at the Spoleto Festival in 1974 and on Broadway at the A.N.T.A. Theatre in 1975. This is important documentation of those productions, even though there are few illustrations of the staging of this "theatre of images." The third selection in the anthology is a 32-page comic book of colored drawings "taken from the stage production" of Lee Breuer's *The Red Horse Animation* presented by Mabou Mines.

Le théâtre d'agit-prop de 1917 à 1932 ed. by Denis Bablet and others. La Cité—L'Age d'Homme: Lausanne, 1977. *Tome I:* 164 pp. 15 illustrations. *Tome II:* 169 pp. paperback.

The latest publications in the Théâtre Années Vingt series, these are the first two volumes of a four-volume anthology on agitprop. Both are on Russian theatre. The first contains articles on aspects of agitprop ("Les phases historiques . . . ," "Méthods et formes spécifiques," "La Blouse bleue," etc.) and a chronological chart comparing presentations, etc. between 1917 and 1936. The second volume contains theoretical writing (by Kerjentsev, Evreinov and others) and sixteen scripts, including five by Mayakovsky. Future volumes will include materials on agitprop in Germany, France, Roumania and the United States.

Monodrama, Attitudes, Tableaux Vivants by Kiersten Gram Holmström. Almqvist and Wiksell: Stockholm 1967. 278 pp. 80 illustrations.

Not a new publication but one that is little known in this country, this scholarly book, subtitled "Studies on Some Trends of Theatrical Fashion, 1770-1815," could be useful to those interested in the relationship of painting, sculpture and theatre and to those who would like precedents for some contemporary work in pictorial or visual theatre. Unfortunately, quotations in German and French are left untranslated.

LIST OF BOOKS RECEIVED

HISTORY AND THEORY

Antike And Theater Heute by Christoph Trilse. Academie-Verlag, Berlin, 1977 (paperback) 11,50M.

Arlecchino a Londra by V. Papetti. Instituto Universitario Orientale, Naples, 1977 (paperback).

Behind the Mask by Bari Rolfe. Persona Products, San Francisco, 1977 (paperback) $2.95.

Canada on Stage: Canadian Theatre Review Yearbook, Don Rubin, ed. York University, Downsview, Ontario, 1977 (hardcover) $14.95.

Carnival: Entertainments and Posthumous Tales by Isak Dinesen. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1977 (hardcover) $10.

The Case of Nora by Moshe Feldenkrais. Harper and Row, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $6.95.

Chautauqua: a Center for Education, Religion and the Arts in America by Theodore Morrison. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1977 (paperback) $6.95.

Circus Techniques by Hovey Burgess. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1977 (hardcover) $11.95.

Conflict and Control in the Cinema, John Tulloch, ed. The Macmillan Company of Australia, South Melbourne, 1977 (paperback).

Contemporary Dramatists, James Vinson, ed. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $35.

Disrupting the Spectacle: Five Years of Experimental and Fringe Theatre in Britain by Peter Ansorge. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 1977 (hardcover) $7.50.

The Eighteenth Century: Costume Reference 4 by Marion Sichel. Plays, Inc., Boston, 1977 (hardcover) $8.95.

Fields of Play in Modern Drama by Thomas R. Whitaker. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. 1977 (hardcover) $11.

French Comic Drama from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century by Geoffrey Brereton. Barnes and Noble Books, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $22.50.

German Theatre Today by Michael Patterson. Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut, 1977 (hardcover) $8.50.

Group Performance of Literature by Beverly W. Long, et. al. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1977 (paperback) $9.95.

How to Run your Own Rock and Roll Band by Bill Henderson. Popular Library, New York, 1977 (paperback) $1.50.

Jacobean, Stuart and Restoration: Costume Reference 3 by Marion Sichel. Plays, Inc., Boston, 1977 (hardcover) $8.95.

Jean Anouilh by Lewis W. Falb. Ungar, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $9.50.

Maxwell Anderson and S. N. Behrman: a Reference Guide by Willian R. Klink. G. K. Hall & Co., Boston, 1977 (hardcover) $12.

Michio Ito: the Dancer and His Dances by Helen Caldwell. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977 (hardcover) $14.95.

Mime Workbook by Samuel Avital. Wisdom Garden Books, Venice, California, 1977 (paperback) $7.95.

Modern Verse Drama: the Critical Idiom by Arnold P. Hincliffe. Barnes and Noble Books, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $6.

The New Intellectuals: a Survey and Bibliography of Recent Studies in English Renaissance Drama, Terence P. Logan, ed., University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977 (hardcover) $16.50.

Next Week—East Lynne: Domestic Drama in Performance, 1820-1874 by Gilbert B. Cross. Bucknell University Press, Cranbury, N.J., 1977 (hardcover) $15.

Nonprofit Repertory Theatre in North America, 1958-1975, Laura J. Kaminsky, ed. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1977 (hardcover) $39.95.

People's Theatre: from the Box Office to the Stage by Mike Davidow. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977 (hardcover) $4.50.

A Pictorial History of the American Theatre, 1860-1976 by Daniel Blum. Crown Publishers, New York, 1977 (fourth edition, hardcover) $12.95.

A Postillion Struck by Lightning: a Memoir by Dirk Bogarde. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, 1977 (hardcover) $8.95.

The Provoked Wife: the Life and Times of Susannah Cibber by Mary Nash. Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1977 (hardcover) $12.50.

Religious Controversies of the Elizabethan Age by Peter Milward. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1977 (hardcover) $21.

Rolf Hochhuth by Rainer Taeni. Humanities Press, Inc., Atlantic Highlands, N.J. 1977 (hardcover) $7.

The Sceptical Vision of Moliere by Robert McBride. Barnes and Noble Books, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $19.50.

Select Bibliography for the Study of Anglo-Irish Literature by Maurice Harmon. P.D. Meany Co., Inc., Port Credit, Ontario, 1977 (hardcover) $17.50.

Shakespeare and Music by Edward W. Naylor. Da Capo Press, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $7.

Shakespeare and Music by Christopher Wilson. Da Capo Press, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $14.95.

Star Acting: Gish, Garbo, Davis by Charles Affron. E.P. Dutton, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $16.95.

Stravinsky in the Theatre by Minna Lederman. Da Capo Press, New York, 1977 (paperback) $3.45.

Tennessee Williams: a Tribute, Jac Tharpe, ed. University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 1977 (hardcover) $29.95.

Theatre and Revolution in France since 1968 by Judith G. Miller, French Forum, Lexington, Kentucky, 1977 (paperback) $7.85.

The Theory of Literary Criticism: a Logical Analysis by John M. Ellis. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977 (paperback) $3.95.

Tirso de Molina and the Drama of the Counter Reformation by H. W. Sullivan. Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, N.J., 1977 (paperback) $[illegible].9.

Tom Stoppard by Ronald Hayman. Rowman and Littlefield, Totowa, N.J., 1977 (hardcover) $7.75.

Topos and Funktion by Arpad S. Andreanszky. Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, Bonn, 1977 (paperback) 29,M.

Uwe Johnson by Ree Post-Adams. Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, Bonn, 1977 (paperback) 19,50M.

Vivien Leigh: a Biography by Anne Edwards. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $9.95.

Writing the Broadway Musical by Aaron Frankel. Drama Book Specialists, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $10.

The Writings of Brendan Behan by Colbert Kearney. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $15.95.

PLAYS

Death of Odysseus by Ben H. Brown. Vantage Press, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $5.95.

Early Dark by Reynolds Price. Atheneum, New York, 1977 (hardcover) $7.95.

Eight Men Speak and Other Plays from the Canadian Workers' Theatre, Richard Wright, ed. New Hogtown Press, Toronto, 1976 (paperback) $4.50.

Five Plays for Stage, Radio and Television, Alrene Sykes, ed. University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1977 (hardcover) $13.50.

The Frolicks by Elizabeth Polwhele. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N.Y., 1977 (hardcover).

Into the Beyond by Franco S. Buono. Exposition Press, Inc., Hicksville, N.Y., 1977 (hardcover) $7.50.

Jo Ann in the White House by Irving Stettner. X Press Press, New York, 1977 (paperback) $2.

Puppet Plays from Favorite Stories by Lewis Mahlmann. Plays, Inc., Boston, 1977 (hardcover) $8.95.

The Rape of Manhood by Kunle Adedoyin. Exposition Press, Inc., Hicksville, N.Y. 1977 (hardcover) $5.50.

The Sorrows of Frederick and Holy Ghosts by Romulus Linney. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, New York, 1977 (paperback) $3.95.

Through the Night and Such Impossibilities by Trevor Griffiths. Faber and Faber, London, 1977 (paperback) $4.95.